

ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

LORD ASHCROFT INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS SCHOOL

THE IMPACT OF CROSS-CULTURAL FACTORS  
ON GLOBAL KEY ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT

CHRISTIAN LAUTENSCHLÄGER

A thesis in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements of Anglia Ruskin University  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Submitted: 02 November 2020

## i. Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my supervisory team Dr Nektarios Tzempelikos, Dr Niall Caldwell and Cassie Jones, for their dedicated support and guidance. Especially, I thank Dr Nektarios Tzemplikos for his encouragement and enthusiasm to assist me during my journey of this research project and PhD thesis.

I also would like to thank my family for supporting me during the compilation of this dissertation.

Finally, I would like to thanks all participants that took part in the study and enabled this research to be possible.

## ii. Abstract

The present research is the first study, which investigates the impact of cross-culture on key account management. The current academic knowledge in this subject is limited, and therefore, essential research questions in global key account management remain unanswered. Further investigations are required.

The research methodology in this study is following a quantitative approach, using a questionnaire for collecting primary data from respondents. The questionnaire, consisting of 46 closed-ended questions, has been designed in English and further translated into Spanish, Chinese and Japanese. The questionnaire has been published globally in a web-based format. The target audience were sales professionals, including key account managers. In the study, 432 respondents from various cultural regions completed the questionnaire.

First, the study demonstrates that those regions differ significantly in their cultural dimensions and therefore have an impact on key account management. Around 30.5% of respondents provide evidence that their companies experience issues in key account management, according to cross-culture. Organisations with an institutionalized key account management program are less affected to cross-cultural failure compared to implemented key account management. Furthermore, to overcome those cultural barriers, 55.5% of the sales organisations put efforts in providing guidelines and training to work cross-culturally. The study also demonstrates that corporate functions with close interactions and touchpoints to key account management, such as top management, are more aware, prepared and supportive of the needs of cross-cultural key accounts.

In conclusion, the present study proofs that sales organisations experience cross-cultural challenges in their key account management programs. The variances in the respective cultural dimensions between sales organisations and key accounts require a learning organisation, so that cross-cultural challenges within the key account process are timely identified and managed adequately. Finally, this study provides the first configurational framework on cross-cultural key account management and therefore lays the foundation for further investigations into international business.

**Keywords:** Key account management, global key account management, cross-cultural management, cultural dimension, cultural distance, psychic distance

## Table of Contents

i.	Acknowledgement .....	3
ii.	Abstract.....	4
iii.	List of Tables.....	7
iv.	List of Figures.....	8
1	Introduction .....	9
2	Research aim and objectives.....	12
2.1.	Cultural similarity and diversity .....	12
2.2.	Cross-cultural key account management.....	13
2.3.	Individual level of key account management .....	13
3	Key account management.....	15
3.1.	Introduction to industrial marketing.....	15
3.2	Definition of key account management.....	16
3.3	Types of key account management.....	20
3.4	Alignment with key research on key account management .....	22
4	Cross-culture management .....	33
4.1.	Introduction into cross-culture .....	33
4.2.	Configurational framework on cross-cultural management .....	37
4.3.	Alignment with key research on cross-cultural management .....	46
5	Research hypotheses.....	50
6	Research methodology.....	52
6.1.	Introduction .....	52
6.2.	Research approach.....	56
6.3.	Research strategy .....	56
6.4.	Designing questionnaire.....	57
6.5.	Letter of invitation .....	65
6.6.	Validity of the questionnaire .....	65
6.7.	Reliability of the questionnaire.....	65
6.8.	Translation process.....	66
6.9.	Sampling design.....	67
6.10.	Data analysis and statistics .....	70
7	Results .....	71
7.1	Introduction .....	71
7.2	Questionnaire.....	71

7.3	Demographics of the respondents.....	74
7.4	Society and culture.....	82
7.5	Organisation and corporate management .....	93
7.6	Cross-cultural management of key accounts.....	102
7.7	Cross-cultural skills for key account managers.....	113
8	Discussion.....	120
8.1.	Review on achieving research aim and objectives .....	120
8.2.	Theoretical reflection on cross-cultural key account management.....	132
8.3.	Configurational framework on key account management .....	136
8.4.	Managerial implications.....	142
8.5.	Limitations and directions for future research .....	144
9.	Conclusion .....	148
	References.....	149
	Appendices .....	171
	Appendix 1 – Details about questions in the questionnaire .....	171
	Appendix 2 – Cover letter and questionnaire in English .....	174
	Appendix 3 – Cover letter and questionnaire in Spanish .....	179
	Appendix 4 – Cover letter and questionnaire in Simple Chinese .....	185
	Appendix 5 – Cover letter and questionnaire in Japanese .....	191
	Appendix 6 – Statistical details .....	196

### iii. List of Tables

Table 1: Comparison of sales roles regarding geography, work focus, years of experiences, strategic importance, type of customer relationship, salary range and prevalence (table content is based on current literature sources and common commercial practices) .....	20
Table 2: Research hypotheses .....	51
Table 3: Structure and layout of the questionnaire.....	63
Table 4: Sampling frame of the target population of the study (status 08/03/2019).....	68
Table 5: Frequencies for ‘What is your culture-religious background?’ .....	74
Table 6: Frequencies for ‘Which of the following sales positions best describes your current role function?’ .....	75
Table 7: Overview of questions regarding their respective cultural dimensions .....	83
Table 8: Overview of questions regarding company profile and corporate culture .....	94
Table 9: Questions regarding cross-cultural management of key accounts .....	103
Table 10: Overview of questions regarding their job qualities for key account managers....	114

#### iv. List of Figures

Figure 1: Affiliation of key account management in the sales speciality map (presented perspective is based on common commercial practices) .....	19
Figure 2: Lewis model of culture categories.....	33
Figure 3: Geographical perspective – Domestic model of key account management (A) and Non-domestic model of key account management (B) (presented perspective is based on current literature and common commercial practices).....	39
Figure 4: Relationship between cross-cultural distance and key account management regarding corporate capabilities (A) and business opportunities (B) (presented perspective is based on current literature and common commercial practices) .....	44
Figure 5: Psychic distance in key account management – a revised conceptual framework of the information flow and processing between national, individual and firm-level [modified, obtained initially from Smith et al. (2011)]. .....	46
Figure 6: Research Onion (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009) .....	56
Figure 7: Workflow for designing survey questions (Awang, 2012) .....	58
Figure 8: Public website to access the global research study .....	72
Figure 9: Number of daily responses (A) and Box plot analysis (B) of the data collection (sum of all responses throughout all questionnaires).....	73
Figure 10: Educational level analysed by job role .....	76
Figure 11: Comparison of societal parameters regarding cultural backgrounds .....	92
Figure 12: Theoretical reflection on organisations regarding cross-cultural management ...	134
Figure 13: Revised configurational framework on key account management.....	142

# 1 Introduction

'Authentic marketing is not the art of selling what you make but knowing what to make. It is the art of identifying and understanding customers' needs, and creating solutions that deliver satisfaction to the customer, profit to the producers and benefits for the stakeholder.' This quote by Philip Kotler highlights the impact and value of building and maintaining mutual relationships with targeted customers regarding customer satisfaction and the organisation's profitability. Philip Kotler is known as the 'father of modern marketing' and is considered as one of the leading voices in marketing management for the past 50 years (Tesseras, 2018). His quote from the late 1980s illustrates the importance and relevance of marketing management, especially relationship management, in a buyer-seller interaction and partnership.

Relationship marketing is a relatively new area of marketing management which started to become recognisable in the scholarly literature at the late 1980s. First research studies defined relationship marketing as "activities that emphasize buyer-seller interaction and communication" (Crosby and Stephens, 1987), which further supports "a long-term relationship rather than an individual transaction" (O'Neal, 1989). One of the first overview articles was published by Christian Gronroos, where he highlighted the current challenges of marketing due to the globalization of markets and therefore, the need for mutual partnerships and networks. These new demands of marketing and marketing research have been addressed to play an important role in service competition and management (Gronroos, 1993). The first perspective of relationship marketing was published in 1994 by Uta Juttner and Hans-Peter Wehrli. Both authors observe relationship marketing from a long-term customer relationship and the value system perspective. Therefore, customer relationship as a dyadic interaction can be described as a competitive advantage which secures a continuous dialogue between customers and sales organisations. This increased interdependence is the foundation of a memory-based relationship where all participants understand the respective value expectations and preferences. Finally, long-term customer relationships can be considered as an added value for customers and sales organisations.



In conclusion, this perspective from Uta Jüttner and Hans-Peter Wehrli on relationship marketing build a first scholarly foundation to explore the value of the long-term relationships and the design of value systems for horizontal and vertical cooperation partners (Jüttner and Wehrli, 1994) (Wehrli and Jüttner, 1996). The first theory on relationship marketing was published in 1994 by Robert M. Morgan and Shelby D. Hunt. Both authors addressed with their study on independent automobile tire retailers the significance of conceptualizing relationship commitment and trust as mediators of important relational variables. This Commit-Trust theory for relationship marketing proposes that acquiescence, propensity to leave, cooperation, functional conflict, and uncertainty will be positively influenced in relationship marketing. Both authors also propose the first definition of relationship marketing, which 'refers to all marketing activities directed toward establishing, developing and maintaining successful relational exchanges' (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Shankar Ganesan concluded a similar view on trust and commitment to relationship marketing in 1994. The study on retail buyers and vendors sees the success of relationship marketing in mutual dependence and the extent to which they trust one another. Both factors are related to a positive outcome to environmental uncertainty, transaction-specific investments, reputation and buyer/seller satisfaction (Ganesan, 1994). A first configurational perspective regarding making relationship marketing operational was published by Evert Gummesson in 1994. He referred that relationship marketing is related to an ongoing change in organisations by a continuous creation, transformation and maintenance of networks due to the combination of its strengths and resources with those from other organisations. He also suggested and defined 30 different types of relationships in marketing, ranging from nano relationships to market relationship and mega relationships. Finally, he concludes that relationship marketing requires a holistic view in kind of a larger context, inside as well as outside the company, together with a short- and long-run perspectives. Therefore, relationship marketing symbolizes an organisational process, a chain of activities, which shall be beneficial to all parties and participants (Gummesson, 1994). These first attempts in relationship marketing research built the basis for future debates and controversies. Therefore, during last two and half decades, relationship marketing was intensively investigated regarding

(A) relationship marketing evolution, theories and concepts, (B) impact on firm performance and outcome, (C) customer experience and behaviour, (D) technological requirements and instrumentation, and (E) relationship marketing practices adopted by various industries (Harker and Egan, 2006) (Das, 2009) (Ashish and Sahu, 2012). A well-established type of relationship marketing is key account management, where sales organisations define valuable customers as key accounts and provide them with a value-added and customer-centric service. Key account management focuses on a memory-based relationship with clients by establishing mutual trust and commitment (Alvarado, Romero-Salcedo and Sheremetov, 2004).

Nowadays, the impact of cross-culture plays a critical role in the institutionalization and implementation of key account management. Various cross-cultural factors in terms of education, language, law and politics, religion, material culture, values, attitudes, perceptions and others, determine and define the framework for how people interact and do business with people from different cultures (Harden and Zhang, 2013). Especially, key account management in an international or global environment will be affected by various cross-cultural determinants. Cultural mismatches between supplier and key accounts create environmental uncertainties, including the risks of losing cooperate trust and brand awareness, aggravated customer communications and poorly understood customer experiences (Jones and McCleary, 2004) (Alhussan, Al-Husan and Alhesan, 2017).

Therefore, the present thesis is intended to contribute new knowledge and insights into the field of relationship marketing, mainly focusing on key account management. In chapter two, the research aims and objectives of the present study will be explained. Whereas, chapter three and four will provide an introduction to the topics of key account and cross-cultural business management. Chapter five introduces the research hypothesis. The applied methodology of the performed research study will be described in chapter six. Research outcomes will be presented in chapter seven, whereas the discussion and scientific disputation of the results will be exemplified in chapter eight. Chapter nine summarizes and concludes the research findings.

## 2 Research aim and objectives

Due to the age of globalization, key account management is facing challenges in cross-national management, including relationship marketing, customer experience management and market communication. Due to regional differences between suppliers, manufacturers and key accounts in terms of language, religion, cultural behaviours and perceptions, organisational barriers and personal hurdles can occur and thus influence the operational and strategic concept of key account management (Matthews and Thakkar, 2012). The challenge nowadays is to understand the role and function of culture in business management, especially in establishing and maintaining of cross-national industrial account management. Therefore, the knowledge of the cultural and interpersonal orientation of regional business partners can be considered as a key success factor for long-term commitments and relationships in cross-national businesses (Williams, Han and Qualls, 1998). This corporate but also individual ability can be considered as a cross-culture competence in the understanding of culture as the code or creation of meaning to function effectively in other cultures (Gertsen, 1990). The overall research aim of this study is to develop a conceptual framework for sales organisations according to the implementation and institutionalization global key account management. Therefore, the conceptual framework is aimed to elucidate the key determinants and factors to manage key accounts successfully in a cross-cultural environment. Accordingly, this study is following three primary research objectives to explore the impact of cross-culture regarding corporate and individual awareness and capabilities to implement and institutionalize an appropriate key account management program.

### 2.1. Cultural similarity and diversity

This objective to investigate the respective cultural-religious backgrounds from various geographic areas to understand their cultural dimensions in terms of different beliefs, values, practices, norms and patterns. In this context, two research questions need to be answered to understand the cultural challenges of key account management from the organisational and individual perspective:

- What are the major cultural-religious differences or similarities between different geographic regions regarding their psychological, sociological, geopolitical and anthropological backgrounds?
- Which behavioural traits demonstrate a significant impact on cross-national management, including relationship marketing, and customer experience management?

## 2.2. Cross-cultural key account management

This research objective is aimed to investigate the organisational awareness and capabilities for the implementation and institutionalization key account management regarding a cross-cultural context and environment. In this context, two research questions need to be answered:

- What are the requirements for sales organisations to implement and institutionalize a key account management program?
- What are the cross-cultural competencies for key account management regarding the understanding of culture as the code or creation of meaning to function effectively in other cultures or geographical areas?

## 2.3. Individual level of key account management

This objective is aimed to investigate the individual awareness and ability for sales professionals to manage key accounts in a cross-cultural context and environment. In this context, two research questions need to be answered:

- What is the organisational impact of the psychic distance from sales professionals regarding the awareness and ability to manage a cross-cultural environment?
- How do sales organisations manage and influence the individual traits of sales professionals regarding cross-cultural key account management?

Finally, these three major research questions are fundamental to understand the role and function of culture in business management, especially in establishing and maintaining of cross-national key account management. Furthermore, these objectives support the development of a new configurational framework for global key account management, focusing

on operational and strategic alignment, business process re-engineering, change management, leadership development, and employee engagement.

### 3 Key account management

#### 3.1. Introduction to industrial marketing

Extended to the American Marketing Association definition of marketing, industrial marketing can be understood as the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, and partners, primarily in a business-to-business environment and exchange (Gundlach and Wilkie, 2009). Nowadays, industrial marketing is considered as relationship marketing rather than transactional marketing, where consumers are associated with demand, firms with supply and marketing as the act of connecting the two (Hadjikhani and LaPlaca, 2013). Therefore, industrial marketing as a corporate customer management process encompasses the strategic orientation and perception of sales management, buyer behaviour, innovation/product development, marketing strategy and management, channels/distribution, and buyer-seller relationships (Laplaca and Katrichis, 2009). Industrial marketing has developed two distinct directions: the value of (augmented) goods and services, and the value of relationships (Lindgreen, Hingley, Grant et al, 2012). It seems that “more value” is the key to industrial marketing as customers are becoming a key source of competitive advantages because, in addition to revenues, suppliers can collaborate regarding product ideas, technologies, and market access from their customers (Walter, Ritter and Gemünden, 2001). A unique form of industrial marketing is key account management, which means targeting the most significant and valuable customers by providing them with special treatment in marketing, administration, and service (Martínez-López, Merigó, Gázquez-Abad et al, 2020). This approach to marketing, focusing on finding solutions to complex problems by providing expertise, resources, and post-sale follow-up create an entirely different product offering for the seller, designed to meet the customer’s needs (Barrett, 1986).

### 3.2 Definition of key account management

The origin of key account management can be found in suppliers' observation that customers might differ in representing a high turnover, exceptional brand reputation, high technological competencies, geographical proximity (Pardo, Henneberg, Mouzas et al, 2006) and easier market access (Walter, Ritter and Gemünden, 2001). Therefore, sales organisations increase their attention to those key customers by fostering relationship management via key account initiatives or programs (Kempenars and van der Hart, 1999). Moreover, key account management can be considered as a strategic approach of sales organisations to optimise the corporate value-creation competences in consultative (Guesalaga and Johnston, 2010) and solution selling (Sheth and Parvatiyar, 2002) rather than transactional product selling. Key account management is assessed to improve the firm sales performance (Sullivan, Peterson and Krishnan, 2012) and relationship perception between buyer and seller (Sullivan, Peterson and Krishnan, 2012) (Tzempelikos and Gounaris, 2015). The evidence is given, that key account management is driving faster relationship benefits for customers rather than financial improvement for suppliers. In contrast, sales organisations benefit after a significant time lag from implementation and customer benefits (Davies and Ryals, 2014). The implementation and execution of key account management is an organisational innovation process, which requires the involvement of change management and learning organisation (Guenzi and Storbacka, 2015). Therefore intra-organisational determinants (e.g. activities, actors, resources, and approach formalization) (Homburg, Workman and Jensen, 2002) and initiatives (e.g. strategy, skills, shared values, style, structure, staff, systems) (Zupancic, 2008) (Waterman, Peters and Phillips, 1980) are crucial organisational factors for key account management programs. Overall, key account management is more than a sales or marketing initiative as it requires a change across the entire organisation (Davies and Ryals, 2014). In detail, key account management is a strategic direction for sales organisations to intensify the relationships between essential partners and clients in the B2B/B2C markets. Therefore, key account management describes a customer-focused business unit with the overall aim to establish a long-term, strategic and collaborative partnership with clients to gain more

significant business opportunities and thus drive significantly higher revenue and turnover. Furthermore, key account management underlies a commercial approach to serve high-potential, multi-location accounts with complex needs requiring individual attention through long-term and established relationships (Abratt and Kelly, 2002). Thus, organizations add additional resources and proficiencies to their customer experience capabilities to implement an organizational environment for key account management to meet the individual requirements and needs of profitable customer accounts. Sales organizations operating at an international or global level are most widely characterized by the implementation and establishment of key account management. Moreover, key account management is also considered as an essential strategic approach for professional services organisations with a high knowledge intensity (outcome of production is significantly based on intricate knowledge), low capital intensity (specific machinery which is central to the output), and professionalised workforce (particular knowledge base, advanced qualifications and/or self-regulation, professional and ethical codes of conduct) (von Nordenflycht, 2010). Therefore, key account management is widely established in the pharmaceutical, chemical, biotechnological and healthcare industry where advanced products for medicine, diagnostics, and research will be produced and marketed for a specialized clientele of consumers and customers. Key account management is also common in the information technology industry, telecommunication industry, finance and banking, and food industry. The implementation and establishment of a key account management approach are always associated with high corporate expectations and commercial goals. It is not surprising that key account management is considered as a strategic tool to drive more revenue through a more strategic and collaborative partnership with key clients. However, the most critical factor for key account management is time as the realization and execution of key account management requires years, not months, to establish a trustful and profitable relationship with key clients. The rate of failure of key account management implementation is substantial as many organizations reporting failure to achieve the self-imposed outcomes. The failure of key account management is always based on concatenation of different circumstances of strategic and operational practices (Friend, Curasi,



Boles et al, 2014) (Wilson and Woodburn, 2014) (Leischnig, Ivens, Niersbach et al, 2018). Common reported causes of failure are the lack of executive support across the organization, wrong assignment of customer accounts as qualified key accounts, less-qualified sales representatives as key account managers, and the non-existence of a sufficient corporate infrastructure to collaborate with key account management (Brady, 2004) (Wilson and Woodburn, 2014).

### 3.2.1 Sales speciality framework

Enterprises are characterized by a structured framework and designated processes, which build the foundation for providing formal authority, departmental responsibilities and statement of tasks for individuals and groups working in the organization (Brudner, 2020). Sales organizations are part of the entrepreneurial framework focusing mainly on achieving corporate sales and revenue objectives. However, sales organizations are characterized by a unique framework of formal functions, processes, and responsibilities. Mainly global enterprises are characterised by a spatial-economic approach to serve global, international, national, and account sales (Distribution, 2017). This commercial specialization of a sales organization concludes to a common structural-functional framework based on inside sales, territory (national) sales, account sales, and key account sales (Minolta, 2009). A more specialised sales role and function are distributor sales, where regional resellers market goods and services from manufacturers in their local/regional geographies. Other specialised sales roles are product and service sales specialists who are paying special commercial attention to certain product types or services (Core, 2019) (see figure 1).

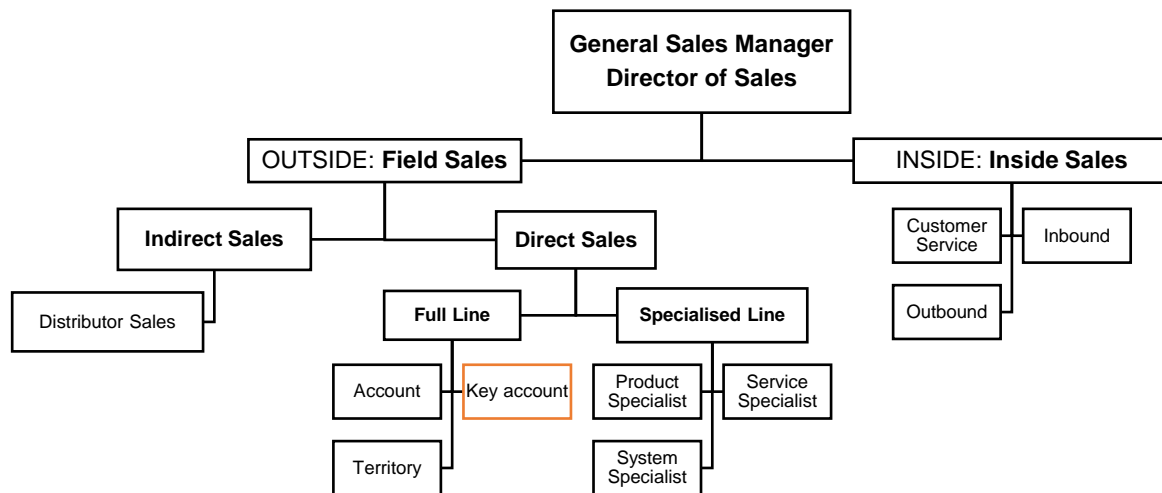


Figure 1: Affiliation of key account management in the sales speciality map (presented perspective is based on common commercial practices)

In comparison to other sales roles, key account management is always affiliated in the area of field sales. Those sales professionals have a client-facing role which involves travelling around and holding meetings with key clients as the representative of a company, its products and services. Therefore, key account managers are working outside the office environment sourcing potential customers, maximising understanding of key customer needs and requirements and expanding the relationships with existing key customers by continuously proposing solutions that meet their objectives (see table 1). Further differentiators are prevalent to distinguish key account managers from the inside sale, national sale and account, sale representatives, relying on the work focus, strategic importance, customer relationship characteristics, level of professional experiences, and salary range (Sleep, Dixon Andrea, DeCarlo et al, 2020) (Colletti and Tubridy, 1987). In conclusion, key account managers have a long-standing sales experience of many years in a particular business sector. Furthermore, key account managers are strategic essential for sales organisation as they serve as the link of communication between key customers and internal teams in terms of solution and consultative selling (Pardo, Ivens and Niersbach, 2020).

	<b>Inside sales</b>	<b>National sales</b>	<b>Account sales</b>	<b>Key account sales</b>
<b>Geography</b>	Always office-based	Often office-based, occasional field-based	Often field-based, occasional office-based	Always field-based, close distance to key accounts
<b>Work focus</b>	Always transactional sales	Always transactional sales, occasional solution sales	Mainly transactional sales, but often solution sales	Mainly relationship sales, incl. consultative sales
<b>Experiences</b>	Short-term, entry position	Medium-term	Medium-term	Long-standing
<b>Strategic importance</b>	Minor	Moderate	Moderate	High
<b>Customer relationship</b>	Mainly phone and email	Often phone and email, occasional customer visits	Often phone and email, preference for customer visits	Always customer visits, face-to-face meetings
<b>Salary range</b>	Entry	Median	Median	High
<b>Prevalence (LinkedIn, 2019)</b>	3%	71%	18%	8%

Table 1: Comparison of sales roles regarding geography, work focus, years of experiences, strategic importance, type of customer relationship, salary range and prevalence (table content is based on current literature sources and common commercial practices)

### 3.3 Types of key account management

In practice, the job role and function of key account management appears in different forms and manifestations. Therefore, the variations of key account management mainly refer to three major contributors, such as geography, professional experience and business sector. In academic research, these variations within key account management are less distinguished in studies. In the scholarly literature, mainly key account management and global key account management will be distinguished from each other.

#### 3.3.1 Classification by geography

The classification by geography describes the territorial range and responsibilities of key account managers. National key account managers are mainly working with key accounts within a single country or nation, whereas regional key account managers are managing key accounts across multiple countries. In direct comparison, global key account managers are

responsible for global and international key accounts which operate between different continents and cultural regions.

In detail, the position of a global key account manager can be considered as a more complex form of key account management (Shi, White, Zou et al, 2010). "However, the 'global' dimension of global account management adds some fundamentally different aspects that are not so evident in key account management. These include, for example, cross-cultural issues (to do with, for example, people, systems, processes), management of globally dispersed and cross-cultural teams, management of global versus local issues and conflict, management of global logistics competencies, location of global account managers and the management of global (and cross-cultural) communications. Global account managers need to manage complex internal and external networks, some of which, due to the worldwide context, can also be described as virtual networks" (Holt and McDonald, 2000). More critical for global key account managers is the translation of the key account strategy into effective global and regional operations besides cross-culture differences (Millman, 1996). Therefore, global key account managers are usually located in the key customer's headquarters country (Montgomery and Yip, 2000).

### 3.3.2 Classification by level of experiences

The classification by level of professional experiences will be used to qualify key account managers. Junior key account managers are mainly inexperienced, and they must go through the whole development and training cycle at least a couple of times. Junior positions are entry positions for sales professionals who want to enter the field of key account management. After years of work experience with key accounts, junior key account managers will turn into a common key account manager role. Key account managers with over ten years of professional experience are common as senior key account managers.

### 3.3.3 Classification by business sector

The qualification of key account managers relies on the gained knowledge, professional experiences and personal network in a certain business sector or branch. Therefore, key account managers typically remain a specific business sector, such as pharma, medical devices, life science, information technology, and banking. A changeover into a completely different business sector, e.g. from pharma to banking, is unusual as the strengths of key account managers rely on their business network and in-depth market understanding from a particular business sector.

## 3.4 Alignment with key research on key account management

In the last 40 years, the concept of key account management became more and more popular in the industry and is nowadays an established commercial approach for sales organizations operating at an international or global level. With the beginning of the 1990s, key account management has found its ways in business and marketing management. Since there, key account management has been established as a distinct sub-discipline of relationship marketing and industrial marketing management. In the last three decades, many studies and investigations about key account management have been published. Therefore, the global research landscape of key account management is shaped by various field-based studies, performed surveys and interviews, comprehensive reviews, and theoretical perspectives.

The global research landscape on key account management is characterised by an increased number of published articles from 1983 to 2018. In the early days of key account research, only two or three publications per year have been published. Whereas in the late 2010s, over ten articles per year, focusing on key account management, have been released. Further bibliometric analyses on key account management research demonstrate a share of 97% for original research articles and 3% for systematic literature reviews. Furthermore, around 52.4% of all scholarly articles about key account management have been published in only five different journals. Approximately 23% of all materials have been published in Industrial

Marketing Management, followed by Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing with 13%, Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management with 8.2%, European Journal of Marketing with 4.8%, and Journal of Medical Marketing with 3.4%.

Between 1983 and 2018, around 217 researchers published their results and outcomes as sole authors or in co-authorships. Overall, six significant contributors have been identified as key opinion leaders due to their highest number of publications in the research field of key account management: Catherine Pardo from the EMYLON Business School, Lynette J. Ryals from the Cranfield University, Björn Sven Ivens from the Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg, Nektarios Tzempelikos from the Anglia Ruskin University, Spiros Gounaris from the University of Strathclyde and Iain A. Davies from the University of Bath.

The most recognizable articles in the field of key account management are based on a research cluster of Christian Homburg from the University Mannheim (DE), John Workman from the Creighton University (US) and Ove Jensen from the Otto Beisheim School of Management (DE). In 2002, this authorship published a conceptual approach for key account management focusing on the importance of the organisational design in practice in terms of intra-organisational determinants like activities, actors, resources and formalization (Homburg, Workman and Jensen, 2002). In detail, this article shows the highest number of citations of 477 and therefore, is considered as one of the most recognizable pieces in the field of key account management. In 2003, the same authorship published a primary research study about key account management effectiveness which underpins the previous organisational concept article from 2002. The authors focused on the selling effectiveness in team-selling situations under consideration of intra-organisational determinants like activities, actors, resources and formalization (Workman, Homburg and Jensen, 2003). In the mid/late 1990s, Tony Millman from the University of Buckingham and Malcolm McDonald from the Warwick Business School and Kevin Wilson from Southampton Business School build a research network to publish nameable concepts and articles about key account management. In 1997, Malcolm McDonald published a primary study on the understanding of the development of key account relationships focusing on the organisational formalizations and complexity (McDonald, Millman

and Rogers, 1997). In 1995, Tony Millman published a review article about the nature of key account management, with particular reference to the definition of key accounts, receptivity to key account management among buyers, and a “needs” approach to strategic/operational fit. Furthermore, this article proposes a key account relational development model and examine the managerial implications for selling companies of progression from key account selling to key account management (Millman and Wilson, 1995). Another highly recognizable article was published in 2002 by Jim Blythe from the University of Glamorgan Business School. He was investigating the usage and benefit of trade fairs in key account management, focusing on building corporate partnerships and establishing a shared culture of key account management (Blythe, 2002).

#### 3.4.1 Major areas of research

Based on the current publication landscape, academic research in key account management can be categorised into ten different research areas:

*Corporate strategy (1):* Corporate strategy is a top management approach to define and implement the primary goals and initiatives of a company. Strategic management aims to allocate internal and external resources and plans activities to achieve corporate goals and compete for challenges in the respective markets. The idea of a corporate strategy is based on analysing the current situation via internal and external metrics, followed by strategy formulation in terms of corporate goals and vision. Afterwards, the strategy will be implemented in terms of setting up directions, allocate efforts, clarify the organization, and provide consistency or guidance in response to the environment. In the context, key account management is considered as an essential competitive advantage for companies to allocate internal and external resources to achieve corporate goals and compete for challenges in the market. Under key account management, organisations will develop valuable capabilities, competencies and allocate business-relevant resources to work on the high level of key relationship marketing (Philippe Gosselin, Matthyssens and André Bauwen, 2006). Overall, the corporate strategy, including the top management level are crucial success factors for key

account management in terms of an efficient customer portfolio management and corporate change management (Ojasalo, 2002) (Workman, Homburg and Jensen, 2003) (Spencer, 1999) (Piila and Haapasalo, 2009) (Guesalaga, 2014) (Marcos-Cuevas, Nätti, Palo et al, 2014) (Tzempelikos, 2015). The corporate strategy includes the development of an understanding the business approach to key account management, identifying what resources are available, developing a comprehensive strategic plan, implementing the program, and evaluating and making any necessary adjustments (Davies and Ryals, 2009) (Kientop, 2009) (Ryals and Rogers, 2007) (Zain Ul, Latif and Nazar, 2012). The corporate strategy on key account management must fit with the planning and execution of key account management. Therefore, the corporate strategy has to match also with the buyer's business approach to establish a mutual partnership for enhanced customer values (Ivens, Pardo, Salle et al, 2009) (Millman and Wilson, 1995) (Ming-Huei and Wen-Chiung, 2011) (Pardo, 1999) (Ryals and Davies, 2013). However, the corporate strategy can also be considered as a cause of key account management failure in terms of a misalignment of organisational processes, structures, and systems according to the key account management implementation (Friend, Curasi, Boles et al, 2014) (Wilson and Woodburn, 2014) (Leischnig, Ivens, Niersbach et al, 2018). Furthermore, the top-level management is aimed to support the relationship quality and the key account management effectiveness in terms of an inter-functional coordinator and setting-up clear goals in the key account management implementation process (Nätti and Palo, 2012) (Ivens and Pardo, 2016) (Wilson and Woodburn, 2014) (Wong, Thoo, Muharam et al, 2016). In the end, key account management provides access to a wealth of strategically relevant information for company competitiveness and business performance (Ivens and Pardo, 2014). In the long-term, key accounts place a greater emphasis on human interaction and unique treatment benefits instead of financial interests (Yeh, Wang, Hsu et al, 2017).

*Intra-firm cooperation (2):* The implementation and execution of key account management require a comprehensive coordination and harmonization process between multiple offices and national key accounts in terms of inter-functional alignments and initiatives, social and professional interactions, and knowledge transfer across sites and countries (Sanford and



Maddox, 1999) (Sharma, 1997) (Wong, Thoo, Muharam et al, 2016) (Brady, 2004) (Guesalaga and Johnston, 2010) (Hughes, Foss, Stone et al, 2007) (Piercy and Lane, 2006). Especially global key account management is facing challenges in corporate coordination and harmonization of knowledge, attention to segmenting customer requirement and gaining access to different levels of commercial and technical problem-solving capabilities (Millman, 1996). Therefore, an inadequate cooperate coordination and communication can be considered as a cause of key account management failure in terms of disconnected activities (either geographically or technically distinct, temporally dissociated) (Pardo, 1999) (Ivens and Pardo, 2008). In conclusion, key account management requires cross-functional team collaboration as well as corporate coordination and harmonization (Fleischer, 2010).

*Knowledge management (3):* The acquisition, transferring, usage and analysis of customer knowledge is a crucial business factor for key account management (Salojärvi and Sainio, 2010). The involvement of top management and customer relationship management enhance the utilization of knowledge in the management of key accounts (Salojärvi, Sainio and Tarkiainen, 2010). In details, key account teams have a higher perceived level of customer-knowledge acquisition, dissemination and utilisation, and of supplier's key account performance compared to non-team groups, like top-level management (Salojärvi and Saarenketo, 2013). Furthermore, the transfer of knowledge across nations and company site must be warranted to secure both long-term success and organisational learning for key account management (Cahill, 1998) (McDonald, Millman and Rogers, 1997) (Millman and Wilson, 1996) (Smith, 2009). Furthermore, insufficient communication channels among experts and subgroups cause problems concerning knowledge transfer in key account management in terms of the creation of innovative service concepts (Nätti, Halinen and Hanttu, 2006).

*Key account selection (4):* Key account management is supporting organisations in terms of identifying of their most significant and valuable accounts and organizing an effective relationship marketing in terms of the best prospects for long-term profit (Pels, 1992) (Piercy and Lane, 2006) (Wong, 1998) (Ivens and Pardo, 2014) (Ojasalo, 2002) (Piercy and Lane,

2006) (Wong, 1998) (Ojasalo, 2001). Companies are not always aware of a strategic approach to select key accounts so that firms might work with “hidden key accounts” in relationship marketing (Piercy and Lane, 2006). Furthermore, key account management underlies a continuous renewal process in terms of capabilities related roles, skills and resources, key account selection and opportunity creation (Guesalaga, Gabrielsson, Rogers et al, 2018) (Kempeners and van der Hart, 1999).

*Organisational structure (5):* The success and implementation of key account management are addicted to the organisational framework and individualized decision-making processes (Ivens, Pardo, Niersbach et al, 2016a) (Marcos-Cuevas, Nätti, Palo et al, 2014) (McDonald, Millman and Rogers, 1997) (Wengler, 2007). Therefore, key account management requires organisational key factors to implement and develop a real strategic action plan for key accounts and to reduce barriers and resistance from all levels and functions within the organisation (Millman and Wilson, 1999) (Pressey, Gilchrist and Lenney, 2014). In detail, the key account management concept might base on organisational activities, actors, resources and formalization, which define the dimension of key account management in terms of strategy, solutions, people, management and screening (Homburg, Workman and Jensen, 2002) (Zupancic, 2008) (Zupancic and Müllner, 2008). Similar, the change management for the implementation of key account management focused mainly on tangible factors (strategy, structure and system) and intangible factors (skills, staff, style, and shared values) (Guenzi and Storbacka, 2015). In detail, the implementation of key account management as an integrative relationship function might face challenges with internal structures and processes in terms of a “rush” or “muddling through” in defining of managerial competencies and parallel developments (Hughes, Foss, Stone et al, 2007) (Millman and Wilson, 1996) (Pardo, Missirilian, Portier et al, 2011) (Hughes, Foss, Stone et al, 2007) (Millman and Wilson, 1996) (Pardo, Missirilian, Portier et al, 2011) (Pardo, Salle and Spencer, 1995). The corporate organisation and processes influence the strategic nature of key account management in terms of proactive programs (driven by sales opportunity), reactive programs (driven by customer demands), and the organisation-based programs (inspired by the belief in customer-centric

organisational units) (Brehmer, Geiger and Rehme, 2009). For example, the collaboration between key account management and R&D could also unlock synergies and value creation potential in terms of innovation and customer integration (Wießmeier, Thoma and Senn, 2012). Key account management success depends on different strategic approaches in terms of formal (prone to creeping bureaucracy), reflexive (between the extremes of formal and post-bureaucratic practices), and post-bureaucratic frameworks (liberating from organizational bureaucracy), whereas non-contractual governance mechanism in key account relationship, is more common (Kawsar and Nor Azila Mohd, 2016) (Vanharanta, Gilchrist, Pressey et al, 2014).

*Performance management (6):* Performance management is part of the corporate business intelligence and manages the organization's performance, according to key performance indicators such as revenue, return on investment, overhead, and operational costs. Therefore, performance management is the approach of managing and controlling the business's performance in the context of the business' strategy and towards organisational goals. In details, performance management might overlap in some aspects of organizational research and strategic management as they are all part of the firm's management and corporate planning concept. Regarding key account management, most of the academic research in performance management focuses on key drivers for success. Key account management success is mainly based on the best strategic, operational, and personal fit between supplier and key accounts to invest more in relational assets, personal/social bonds, and satisfaction activities (Richards and Jones, 2013) (Sharma, 2006). As a result, key accounts demonstrate superior performance compared to non-key accounts and stimulate repeat businesses and higher order volumes and thus facilitate the supplier's market performance (Jean, Sinkovics, Kim et al, 2015) (Noor and Ahmad, 2014) (Sharma and Evanschitzky, 2016) (Tzempelikos and Gounaris, 2015). Another essential factor for key account management success is change management of terms of customization of the company's output according to the needs of key accounts in terms of flexible organisational structure and framework (Rehme, Brashear Alejandro, Kowalkowski et al, 2013) (Tzempelikos and Gounaris, 2013). Furthermore, joint

investments and substantial commitments over several years and an effective crisis communication between supplier and key accounts will create added-value solutions and thus are considered as the most important predictors for key account management success (Gounaris and Tzempelikos, 2014) (Ming-Huei and Wen-Chiung, 2011) (Nätti, Rahkolin and Saraniemi, 2014) (Verbeke, Bagozzi and Farris, 2006).

*Consumer behaviour & perception (7):* Strategic partnerships and collaborations are always facing the challenge of different expectations and understanding of how the partnership is aimed and in what the partnership duties and perception are. Therefore, the expectations and perceptions of key accounts according to their relationship with the supplier will influence the strategic and operational concept of key account management. In general, key accounts show higher customer satisfaction and customer loyalty compared to non-key accounts due to the “value-creating-behaviour” of the supplier. For long-term success, the suppliers and their associated key accounts must have the same understanding and perception of a key account relationship. Both parties must have similar business behaviour and attitudes to support a mutual relationship, including support in sharing trust, delivering value, achieving commitments and esteeming each other’s (Daugherty, Ellinger and Plair, 1997) (Pardo, 1997).

*Cross-culture management (8):* The institutionalization, establishment, practice and commercial success of key account management are affected by various cross-cultural factors in terms of education, language, law and politics, religion, material culture, values, attitudes, perceptions and others. In detail, these cross-cultural factors determine and define the framework for how people interact and do business with people from different cultures. Overall, cross-cultural factors have a significant impact on the process of making decisions in the sales cycle and buying process (Harden and Zhang, 2013). Especially, key account management in an international or global environment will be affected by various cross-cultural determinants. Cultural mismatches between supplier and key accounts create environmental uncertainties, including the risks of losing cooperate trust and brand awareness, aggravated customer communications and poorly understood customer experiences (Jones and McCleary, 2004) (Alhussan, Al-Husan and Alhesan, 2017).

*Sales team (9):* The outcome of key account management is heavily addicted to the performance and competences of the underlying sales team (Salojärvi and Saarenketo, 2013). In detail, the performance of key account managers can be influenced by various individual, organisational and environmental factors, which might affect the ability to implement, establish and improve relationships with new and current customers. Job insecurities and poorly managed salary compensation plans show clear evidence to provide a negative impact on the sales team performance (Reisel, Chia and Maloles Iii, 2005) (Tice, 1997). Whereas specialised training and development programs for key account managers have an eminently positive effect in the success of key account management due to knowledge transfer about strategic key account analysis, planning, segmentation and penetration (De Alwis and Rajaratne, 2011) (Kurzrock, 1983). Furthermore, the decision-making process of key account managers will be influenced by emotional (Curasi, Boles and Reynolds, 2018) and rational thought pattern (Durif, Geay and Graf, 2013). Overall, the performance of key account managers is subject to the capabilities to perform collaborative relationships with strategic communication between supplier and key account to enhance the customer value and satisfaction (Georges, 2007) (Lai and Gelb, 2015) (Schultz and Evans, 2002) (Sengupta, Krapfel and Pusateri, 2000). The performance is also subject to the individual feasibilities of intra-organisational communication, location and activation of resources and personnel to support the relationship marketing to key accounts (Ivens, Niersbach and Pardo, 2015) (Jones, Dixon, Chonko et al, 2005) (Ryals and Bruce, 2006) (Sengupta, Krapfel and Pusateri, 2000). Key account managers own a unique commercial perception of strategic sales and demonstrate excellent capabilities in relationship marketing compared to non-key account managers. Although in crisis communication, key account managers can use their selling behaviours to overwhelm resistances and barriers within an organisation (Speakman, Bettis-Outland and Ryals, 2012). Understandably, key account managers might have similar management qualities compared to senior sales managers (Davies and Ryals, 2013).

*Social media and event marketing (10):* Social media is a strategic marketing tool in digital marketing that enables the sharing of information and data, including corporate advertisements

and announcements, to the virtual community. Therefore, social media is considered to be a powerful instrument in digital marketing with substantial commercial potential for the future (Christy and Tracy, 2015). Regarding key account management, social media could be gate entrance for creating and strengthen partnerships with new and long-time customers before personal (face-to-face) meetings happen. Thus, social media could assist key account managers in maintaining and reconnecting to their partnership network more efficiently. In the future, social media could be a strategic business tool for key account management (Lacoste, 2016). Tradeshows and exhibitions are field-based marketing activities of a sales organisation. The aims of organising or attendance exhibitions are mainly brand awareness via non-selling activities and sales management via selling activities. Therefore, customer/partner meetings, market research, the announcement of company news etc. are considered as non-selling activities, whereas lead generation, finding new customers or partners, and closing deals are regarded as selling activities. Regarding key account management, exhibitions might be advantageous for building and establishing partnerships between firms in a dyadic scenario (Sarmiento, Simões and Farhangmehr, 2015). Tradeshows could occupy a pivotal position in key account management regarding the opportunity to have a direct communication channel for the identification of problems, finding solutions for mutual obligations and responsibilities. "The exhibition hall is the business equivalent of the dance hall. It is a place for chance encounters that may lead to romance, or it is a place to go to on a date" (Blythe, 2002).

### 3.4.2 Future research activities in key account management

Due to the age of globalization, companies are facing challenges with cross-culture management, including relationship marketing and marketing communication. Due to regional differences between supplier and key accounts in terms of language, religion, cultural behaviours and perceptions new barriers and restrictions can occur and thus influence the operational and strategic concept of key account management (Matthews and Thakkar, 2012). The majority of research work has been done in countries of the western hemisphere, like United Kingdom (Speakman, Bettis-Outland and Ryals, 2012), and Finland (Salojärvi and

Saarenketo, 2013), France (Pardo, 1999). In contrast, only a few investigations have been performed in other cultural markets, like China (Murphy and Li, 2015), and Saudi Arabia (Alhussan, Al-Husan and Alhesan, 2017). According to the literature available, the impact of culture, including perceptions, behaviours, and attitudes on organizational structures, processes, and practices on key account management and especially global key account management is not fully understood. Now, a systematic investigation in terms of a more extensive cross-culture study or meta-analysis is missing or not yet published. This circumstance raises some first questions:

- What is the impact of cross-culture on key account management in terms of management and business organisation of key accounts?
- Is there a difference in the failure or success rate of key account management between different cultures?
- Which cultures are more eligible to practice key account management and why others do not?
- What are the organisational requirements and challenges to implement and establish key account management in different cultures? Are there different barriers or resistance to key account management?

Finally, cross-cultural management can be considered as an unmet scientific need to understand the impact of cross-culture on key account management across different geographies and territories.

## 4 Cross-culture management

### 4.1. Introduction into cross-culture

The definition of culture is a stand-alone research topic for itself and can not be described in simple terms. However, in general, culture can be considered as explicit and implicit patterns, and behaviours acquired and transmitted symbols, which form a particular achievement of a group of people (Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1952). Therefore, a national culture symbolises a pattern of behaviour, based on values, norms, beliefs and ways of opinion, that are shared and developed by members of a nation or distinct societies (Gurung and Prater, 2006). Many theoretical approaches and concepts have been published to outline cultural behaviours and characteristics. However, especially the cultural models from Richard S. Lewis, Geert Hofstede, and GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) group are the most acceptable and common concepts in business and relationship management. The Lewis triangle model is based on Lewis's time visiting 135 countries, 50,000 executives taking residential courses, and more than 150,000 online questionnaires across 68 different nationalities (see figure 2) (Lewis, 1996).

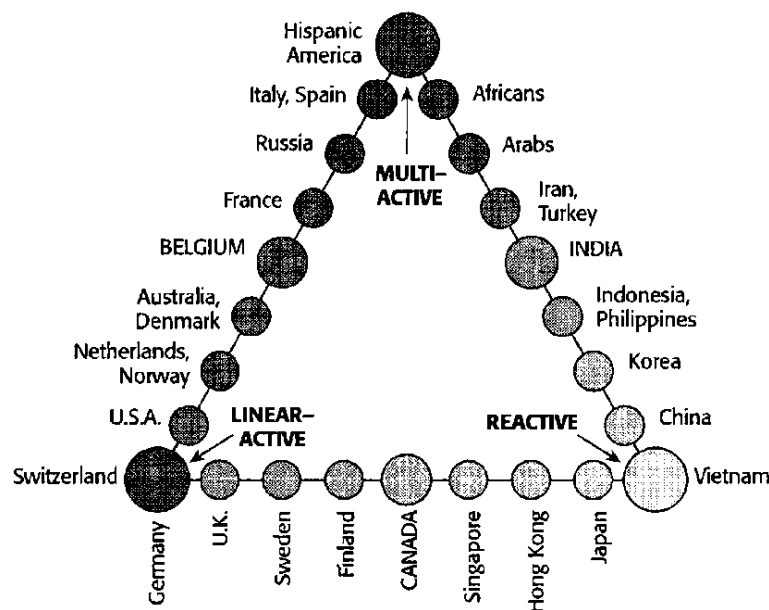


Figure 2: Lewis model of culture categories



Overall, the Lewis model is categorizing cultural communication into three areas. First, the 'reactive category' describes cultures that prioritize courtesy and respect, listening quietly and calmly to their interlocutors and reacting carefully to the other side's proposals, like Chinese, Japanese and Finns. Second, the 'linear-active category' describes cultures who plan, schedule, organize, pursue action chains, do one thing at a time, like Germans and Swiss. And third, the 'multi-active category' describes cultures with lively, loquacious peoples who do many things at once, planning their priorities not according to a schedule, but according to the relative thrill or importance that each appointment brings with it, like Italians, Latin Americans and Arabs. On the other side, the model from Hofstede classifies national cultures due to value differences between nations and regions (Hofstede, 1980a). Hofstede defines culture as a "collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or society from those of another" (Hofstede, 1984). Furthermore, Hofstede determined empirically six key criteria by which national cultures differed, including the *power distance index* (the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally), *individualism* (the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members), *uncertainty avoidance* (the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and have created beliefs and institutions that try to avoid these), *masculinity* (the fundamental issue here is what motivates people, wanting to be the best "masculine" or liking what you do "feminine"), *long-term orientation* (how every society has to maintain some links with its own past while dealing with the challenges of the present and future), and *indulgence* (the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses). Both cross-culture models demonstrate two different, but complementary, point of views in the understanding of culture in the global context. Finally, the GLOBE project investigated about 62 cultures regarding values, patterns, behaviours, and practices at the levels of different industries and organisations. In detail, the GLOBE group analysed the societal, organisational, and leadership effectiveness in various cultural societies (House, Hanges, Javidan et al, 2004). The GLOBE study was designed and expand on Hofstede's cross-cultural research and to investigate the role of management and leadership

topics. Overall, the GLOBE study came up with nine dimensions across both actual social practice and values in the different cultural settings, including *Performance Orientation*, *Future Orientation*, *Gender Egalitarianism*, *Assertiveness*, *Institutional Collectivism*, *In-Group Collectivism*, *Power Distance*, *Humane Orientation* and *Uncertainty Avoidance* (Venaik and Brewer, 2008b). Overall, the research about cross-culture in international business takes the Hofstede and the GLOBE model as a standard approach for further investigations (Adler and Aycan, 2018). “Companies are beginning to learn what nations have always known: in a complex, uncertain world filled with dangerous opponents, it is best not to go it alone. Entente - the striking of an alliance - is a responsible part of every good strategist’s repertoire. In today’s competitive environment, this is also true for corporate managers” (Ohmae, 1989). The challenge nowadays is to understand the role and function of culture in business management and especially in establishing and maintaining cross-national relationships and industrial account management. Therefore, the knowledge of the cultural and interpersonal orientation of regional business partner can be considered as a key success factor for long-term commitments and relationships in cross-national business management (Williams, Han and Qualls, 1998). This corporate ability can be considered as cross-culture competence in the understanding of culture as the code or creation of meaning to function effectively in other cultures (Gertsen, 1990). Cross-cultural competence affects the entire organisation regarding structures and processes, which finally allows international businesses to operate and communicate in an intercultural workplace diversity (James, Tomasz and Salvador, 2006). These cross-cultural competencies rely on the knowledge, skills and attributes of the entire organisation, but especially for customer experience management working in cross-cultural environments. Customer experience management means the process of strategically managing a customer’s entire experience with a brand, including products and services (Schmitt, 2010). Focusing on the cross-cultural environment, customer experience management secures the understanding of the global and regional customer’s journey (Berry, Carbone and Haeckel, 2002). Therefore, national culture regarding the pattern of behaviour, and values/norms, as well as economic/financial climate, must be part of the conceptualisation

of how the customer's experience is created when designing customer experience management strategies (Verhoef, Lemon, Parasuraman et al, 2009). The consideration of cross-cultural varieties in customer experience management creates an environment of positive behaviours between business partners to develop goodwill trust and stronger relationship performances (Dowell, Morrison and Heffernan, 2015). Especially account managers of cross-national business relationships are facing difficulties on the understanding of the host countries cultures and business environment. These capabilities and skills are prerequisites and competitive strengths in customer experience management through a multinational or diversified work environment (Chin and Rowley, 2018). Sales managers with local knowledge and insights into the regional markets are of great value for creating value for international customers and repatriating value back to the company. The evidence is given, when the cultural distance between the two countries is low, the sales rep's capability trust is more important in building rep-owned commitment (Gu, Wang and Wang, 2016). Besides relationship building, cross-culture orientation is an important factor in sales negotiations. By focusing on the interactive part of the cross-cultural sales negotiation, several key variables such as status distinction, impression formation accuracy, interpersonal attraction, information exchange, communication style (verbal, non-verbal), persuasion and bargaining strategy, and concession making have been identified and examined (Simintiras and Thomas, 1998) (Reynolds, Simintiras and Vlachou, 2003). Finally, cross-cultural competence is required from individuals and organisations to function effectively in another culture to understand different perspectives, trends, technologies and approaches to conducting business (Gertsen, 1990). More important is that companies have to create the capabilities to incorporate cultural knowledge for strategic and organisational planning in order to fulfil the requirements of developing for cross-cultural competences (Cross, 1989).

## 4.2. Configurational framework on cross-cultural management

A configurational framework is an approach to develop a more in-depth and systematic understanding of an enterprise regarding organisational structures, functions, processes and practices. Furthermore, a configurational approach elucidates also the operational and strategic alignments of an organisation, focusing on business process re-engineering, change management, leadership development, and employee engagement (Meyer, Tsui and Hinings, 1993b). Therefore, a configurational framework provides the best view in a systemic or holistic manner of an organisation, as clusters of interconnected structures, linked processes, and mutually dependent practices and set of intentions can be analysed and further developed (Camison and González Cruz, 2020). In conclusion, a configurational framework is established in the research of organisational structures and processes due to their advantages compared other approaches, such as 'formulating underlying assumptions' or 'contingency perspectives' (Meyer, Tsui and Hinings, 1993a).

Regarding cross-cultural key account management, a configurational framework elucidates the cross-cultural competencies of an organisation according to the adaptability and customizability of an established organisational framework to align and coordinate the needs and challenges of a cross-cultural environment. Therefore, a configurational framework highlights the capabilities and vulnerabilities of the key account management regarding personal attitudes, skills and knowledge to work in a cross-cultural environment. Overall, a configurational framework on cross-cultural key account management can be observed from three different perspectives:

- Perspective on the geographical dimension of key account management, focusing on the domestic and non-domestic relationships between supplier and key accounts.
- Perspective on the cultural distance, focusing on the level of corporate capabilities and scale to manage business opportunities.
- Perspective on the psychic distance, focusing on the sales force's journey through the customer experience management of domestic and non-domestic suppliers.

#### 4.2.1. Geographical dimension

In general, the marketing management between key accounts and supplier is substantially determined by the geographical relationship regarding transacting cross-national or cross-cultural businesses (Abratt and Kelly, 2002). In a so-called 'domestic model of key account management', the supplier acts as a non-global sales organisation and manage domestic key accounts and non-domestic key accounts. At the same time, domestic key accounts are organisations which are located in the same cultural region as the supplier (Weilbaker and Weeks, 1997). In comparison, non-domestic key accounts are organisations which are based in another cultural part compared to the supplier. Therefore, inside sales specialists, trained on account management, and field-based key account managers have the capabilities to manage domestic key accounts as the business relationship is based on the same cultural behaviours and pattern (Holt and McDonald, 2000). In order to provide a more comprehensive view of the 'domestic model of key account management', Figure 3A has been created according to the current literature above and common commercial practices in sales organisations.

In contrast, the management of 'non-domestic key accounts', like global and international enterprises, requires an additional corporate expenditure in terms of the implementation of field-based key account managers (or teams) or regional offices as the business relationship between supplier and key accounts is based on cross-cultural differences (Spencer, 1999) (Ford and McDowell, 1999). Overall, the management of key accounts within the same cultural environment can be performed by a domestic key account management program, where the corporate implementation and establishment is less complex and costly compared to an international key account management program (Pardo, 1997). In direct comparison to the domestic model, the relationship between a global supplier and their key accounts is condensed to the non-domestic configurational perspective of key account management. This non-domestic model implies that global suppliers operate in high-revenue markets with regional offices to manage and serve regional key accounts. Whereas the management of non-domestic key accounts regarding globally active enterprises can be handled by global key

account managers/teams, collaborating with the relevant regional offices and supplier headquarter (Jones and McCleary, 2004) (Wilson and Weilbaker, 2004). This non-domestic model of key account management elucidates the importance of spatial proximity between the supplier and its regional key accounts, where the regional offices work in the same the cultural environment as their key customers. Therefore, regional offices and global key account managers/teams minimise the cultural distance between key accounts and the international supplier (Millman, 1996). In order to provide a more comprehensive view of the ‘non-domestic model of key account management’, Figure 3B has been created according to the current literature above and common commercial practices in sales organisations.

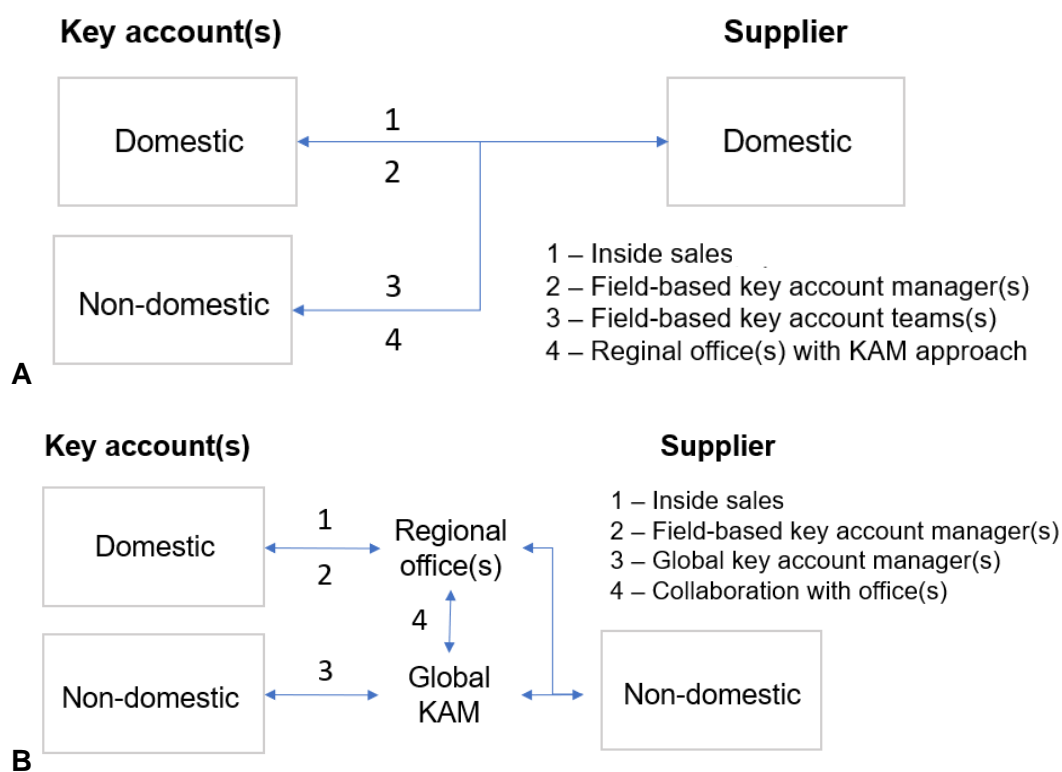


Figure 3: Geographical perspective – Domestic model of key account management (A) and Non-domestic model of key account management (B) (presented perspective is based on current literature and common commercial practices)

Both configurational perspectives provide the evidence that suppliers underlie a geographical and cross-cultural impact on how key account management should be designed, implemented and processed. This configurational view illustrates that mainly three different sales positions are involved in the domestic and non-domestic key account management. All three roles are

aimed to focus and maintain a long-term relationship to key accounts to provide them with the best experience management regarding the solution- and collaborative selling:

Inside sales: Nowadays, inside sales has come up with a significant value in industrial marketing to handle an increased order and request cycle times from key customers, which cannot be controlled by field sales forces (Boyle, 1996). Furthermore, inside sales provide the best knowledge and practices in the coordination of inter-functional resources and capabilities to serve key accounts efficiently (Rapp, Beitelspacher, Schillewaert et al, 2012). The position of inside sales has started to move forward into a higher level of customer orientation and customer relationship management by providing adequate training in industrial marketing relationships (Rapp, Beitelspacher, Schillewaert et al, 2012). Therefore, inside sales are mainly based on the suppliers headquarter and regional offices.

Key account manager: The position of a key account manager is considered as a role that is more relationship-oriented than that of traditional salespeople. However, key account management is associated with high expertise in customer understanding regarding their future needs, as well as value-creation processes, design comprehensive solutions, professional integrity, and building trust. Furthermore, key account managers have a cross-function in leading key account teams in terms the dual challenge of enabling customer access to the supplier resources and creating and capturing value for suppliers as well as enabling interaction and communication with customers' functional departments and the coordination and utilization of knowledge and activities across departments and geographies (Guesalaga, Gabrielsson, Rogers et al, 2018). Therefore, key account managers are in key accounts countries or regions.

Global account manager: The position of a global key account manager can be considered as a more sophisticated form of key account management (Shi, White, Zou et al, 2010). "However, the 'global' dimension of global account management adds some fundamentally different aspects that are not so evident in key account management. These include, for example, cross-cultural issues (to do with, for example, people, systems, processes), the management of globally dispersed and cross-cultural teams, the management of global versus local issues

and conflict, managing global logistics competencies, the location of global account managers and the management of global (and cross-cultural) communications. Global account managers need to manage complex internal and external networks, some of which, due to the global context, can also be described as virtual networks” (Holt and McDonald, 2000). Important for global key account managers is the translation of the key account strategy into effective global and regional operations besides cross-culture differences (Millman, 1996). Therefore, global key account managers are located in the key customer's headquarters country (Montgomery and Yip, 2000). In conclusion, it is given, that key account management is an inter-functional approach of a supplier to manage and service valuable key accounts in certain countries, regions or globally via the usage of dedicated sales teams. Therefore, the geographical dimension plays an integral part in the configurational perspective on cross-cultural key account management.

#### 4.2.2. Cultural distance

The adaption of cultural values that are transmitted through nations' political economy, education, religion, and language may cause an additional burden for enterprises operating in different countries in terms of increase of the cost of entry, decrease operational benefits, and hamper the firm's ability to transfer core competencies to foreign markets (Tihanyi, Griffith and Russell, 2005). Therefore, cultural distance has been used to describe a wide range of corporate strategies and organisational characteristics to fully operate in another cultural region, like countries, where the customers are based. Cross-national companies cause the failure of global businesses by neglecting of cultural differences (Fan and Zigang, 2004). The globalisation of the world economy, on the one hand, has created tremendous opportunities for global collaboration among different countries; on the other hand, however, it has also created a unique set of problems and issues relating to the effective management of partnerships with different cultures.

Therefore, a cultural difference can be considered as a tangible and convenient tool to bypass the complexities and intricacies of culture between supplier and key accounts and can be used



for the risk assessment of foreign industrial relationships, like investments, market entry choice, and the performance of foreign-invested affiliate (Shenkar, 2001) (Keith and Lance Eliot, 2001). Culture distance is might one the key factor for the success or failure of industrial relationships as uncertainties related to both the external environment and the internal relations between the partners create performance ambiguity (Solberg, 2008).

There is a coherence between the cross-culture distance and the usage of corporate capabilities regarding dedicated sales forces (see figure 4A). With increasing the cross-cultural distance between supplier and key account, the higher must be the commitment of corporate capabilities regarding the implementation and establishment of field-based sales forces. Otherwise, the supplier cannot operate profitably in that country or region. According to the commercial value of a particular country or region, the supplier can draw on regional offices to lead and execute the general customer experience management, including a key account management program. On the other hand, the supplier can reduce the efforts to corporate capabilities and establish field-based key account teams, which report back to the headquarter or regional office, if installed. Local offices and field-based key account teams operate in the same cultural environment as the key accounts and therefore minimise the cross-cultural distance between customers and supplier. Regional offices and field-based key account teams are considered as business translators for both business sites to understand and meet the requirements and needs from key accounts and supplier.

In contrast, a low cross-cultural distance between supplier and key accounts can require a lower commitment to corporate capabilities regarding the implementation and establishment of field-based and inside sales forces. Therefore, field-based key account managers are commonly used in regions where the supplier has direct sales channels as the industrial marketing between key account and supplier is less affected by cultural differences. Field-based key account managers have the regional and professional expertise to connect the requirements and needs from key accounts and to the capabilities and resources of the supplier.

In contrast, inside sales specialist are located at the headquarter and main sites of the supplier and deal with key account requests and demands remotely as the cross-cultural distance is remarkably low. The inside sales force demonstrates the best knowledge and practice to lead operational and tactical issues within the supplier to allocate resources and support for the management of key account relationships. In practice, field-based key account managers and inside sales specialists work closely together to meeting the requirements and demands of key accounts.

Furthermore, the cross-cultural distance might also have a direct coherence with the exploitation of business opportunities in key account management. It is well established that a collaborative relationship between key accounts and supplier conditioned more profitable and complex opportunities compared to non-key account businesses (see figure 4B). Therefore, business opportunities with significant value (not always monetary) support the corporate development of the supplier. In detail, significant business opportunities with a low cross-cultural distance can be considered as a 'success potential', as the supplier and key account rely on the same cultural environment so that the opportunity is associated with a high probability of success. In contrast, valuable business opportunities from key accounts with an increased cross-cultural distance are considered as 'growth potential' as the supplier exposes the challenges in the change management process and learning organisation to customise the intra-organisational determinants according to the cross-cultural business needs. This circumstance elucidates that 'growth potentials' mainly support the corporate development of the supplier.

In contrast, less valuable business opportunities can be used to evaluate the strategic direction of the supplier regarding cross-cultural key account management. Therefore, 'orientation potential' symbolises a status, where suppliers can find their organisational approach to deal with opportunities from nearby key accounts. These opportunities are associated with a high probability of success and therefore build the foundation for the learning organisation and change management for key account management.

In contrast 'failure potential' symbolises a circumstance, where supplier works on their corporate development to meet the requirements and needs of cross-cultural key accounts whereas the business opportunity is not facing a considerable relevance for the business performance of the supplier. Overall, business opportunities from key accounts can help suppliers in their corporate development due to the consideration and contemplation of cross-culture requirements. On the other hands, business opportunities can also be regarded as corporate risks if the supplier cannot fulfil the criteria of cross-cultural competence.

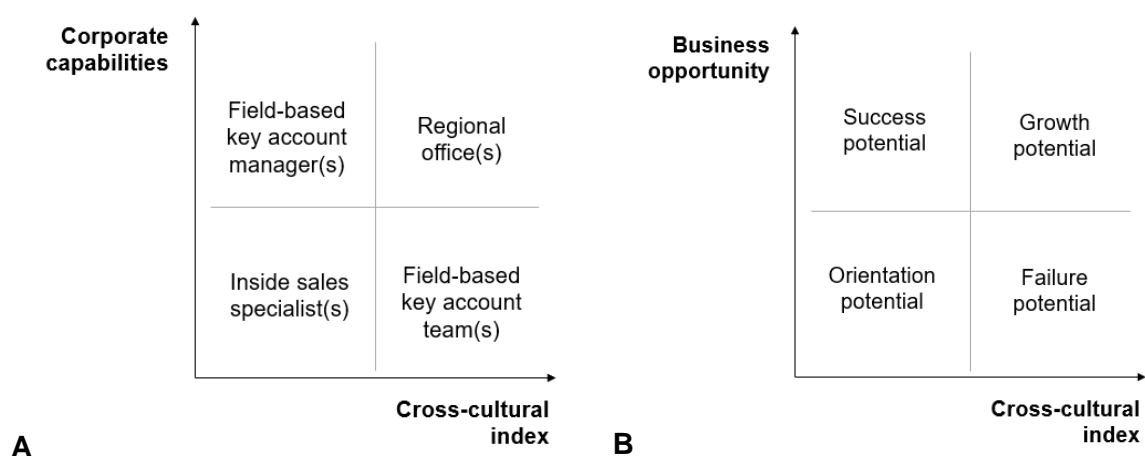


Figure 4: Relationship between cross-cultural distance and key account management regarding corporate capabilities (A) and business opportunities (B) (presented perspective is based on current literature and common commercial practices)

#### 4.2.3. Psychic distance

The impact of cross-culture on intra-organisational determinants can be described with the psychic distance, which includes the disturbance in information flows between organisations and foreign markets caused by actors' perceptions (Smith, Dowling and Rose, 2011). Therefore, the psychic distance is defined as the sum of all factors that prevent information passed between the market and the enterprise, including language, culture and political system, level of education and economic development stage (Zhang, 2014). Indeed, cross-cultural distance and psychic distance are related topics in the field of international businesses.

However, in general, cross-cultural distance is focusing on the aspect of the difference in cultural behaviours, norms, pattern, beliefs, and many others between countries or regions (Morosini, Shane and Singh, 1998). Whereas, the psychic distance is focusing on the individual's mind regarding the perception, interpretation and further processing of different cultural aspects between the native country and the foreign market (Ojala, 2015). Therefore, the psychic distance is highly subjective; it is only applied at an individual level as opposed to a cultural or country level (Sousa and Bradley, 2006). Especially in key account and account management, the personal relationships of the dedicated sales forces between supplier and customers play a crucial role in the success of industrial marketing. Therefore, the individual level of cross-cultural perception and interpretation is fundamental to operate across organisational determinants to form and establish a customer-centric company culture on key account management (Kalafatis, 2002). The psychic distance is the company foundation for change management regarding the institutionalisation of cross-cultural aspects from the foreign markets into the organisational culture and operation. It is obvious, that all individuals of the key account program, like key account managers, inside sales, first-line management etc. experience various levels of cross-culture corresponding to their objective and subjective characteristics, work environment, including knowledge, and customer touch-points (Smith, Dowling and Rose, 2011) (Johanson and Vahlne, 2009). Therefore, these individual levels symbolise a principal knowledge input for international organisations according to their operational and strategic alignment to the key account management. Thus, the psychic distance is the primary driver of corporate change management and learning organisation for key account management, focusing on the organisational culture, actors, activities, resources and approach formalisation. The knowledge, generated by the psychic distance, is pointing the corporate way and level in industrial relationship management. This input of psychic distance determines the dimension of the customer-centric approach for the key account according to the customer experience and value management. Mainly, the relationship management with key accounts is based on high standards in collaborative partnerships to optimise the corporate value-creation competences in consultative and solution selling. This firm-level is the

consequence and implication of the psychic distance of individuals in the key account management approach. Therefore, cultural distance and psychic distance are potentially powerful determinants of the way to develop and maintain cross-border relation- and partnerships between supplier and key accounts (Katsikeas, Skarmetas and Bello, 2009) (Obadia, 2013). In detail, psychic distance leads to increased inter-connectedness at the foreign market level, which affects the knowledge transfer positively in the relationships between supplier and their foreign key customers (Nordman and Tolstoy, 2014). Therefore, psychic distance is the most crucial force in the approach formalisation and corporate alignment of key account management to create an organisational culture with a customer-centric view on national and international key accounts (see figure 5).

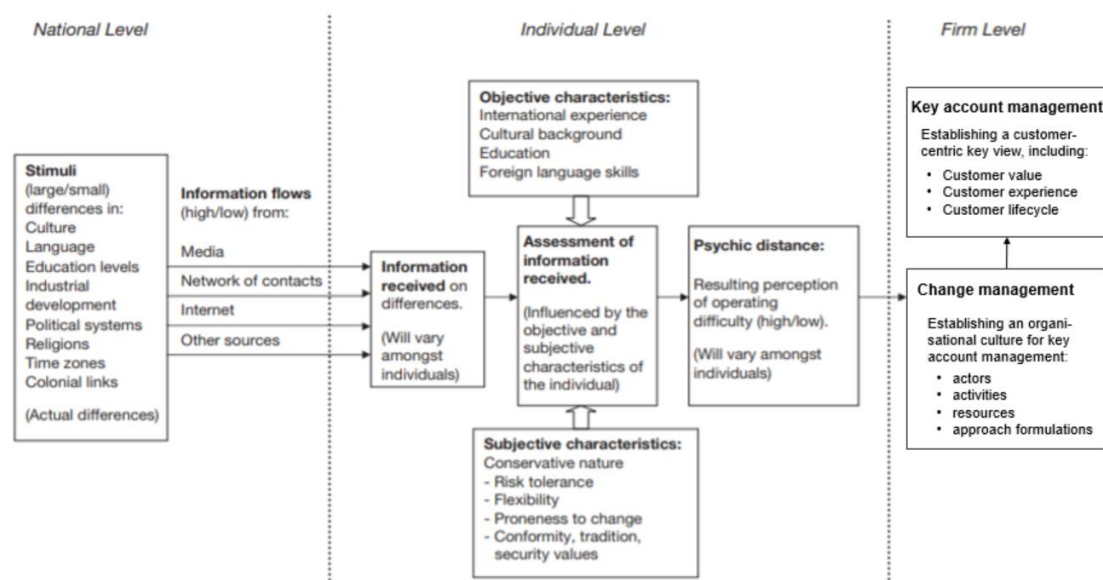


Figure 5: Psychic distance in key account management – a revised conceptual framework of the information flow and processing between national, individual and firm-level [modified, obtained initially from Smith et al. (2011)].

#### 4.3. Alignment with key research on cross-cultural management

Scholarly literature about configurational frameworks in business management is an emerging academic concept to describe an organisation in terms of interconnected structures, processes and practices. In this context, 44 articles have been published from 1997 to 2019. In academic research, configurational perspectives have been used widely for the understanding of

manufacturing (Ahmad, Schroeder and Sinha, 2003) (Raymond and Croteau, 2006), information technology (Lee, Miranda and Kim, 2004) (Jeffers, Muhanna and Nault, 2008) (El Sawy, Malhotra, Park et al, 2010), and quality management (Ng, Zhao and Rungtusanatham, 2006) (Widmer, Giudici, Le Goff et al, 2009) (Jentsch, Schlosser and Beimborn, 2015) (Kosmol, Reimann and Kaufmann, 2018), (Wang, Kung, Gupta et al, 2019) and relationship management (Homburg, Workman and Jensen, 2002) (Nagy, Megehee, Woodsid et al, 2017). Most of the configurational frameworks in business management follow the 7-S framework from Robert H. Waterman, whereas an effective organisational change is a relationship between structure, strategy, systems, style, skills, staff, and something called superordinate goals (Waterman, Peters and Phillips, 1980). These determinants have been taken up by the key account management research and further investigated regarding industrial marketing management. Therefore, most of the research publications for key account management focus on the intra-organisational processes, structures and factors which enables an enterprise to operate in an industrial marketing relationship regarding a key account management program. An early configurational framework of key account management was published by Tony Millman. The concept is based on required organisational competencies, such as formulation, implementation and resource allocation, to move from key account selling to key account management (Millman and Wilson, 1996) (Millman and Wilson, 1995). Another conceptual model of key account management, published from Christian Homburg, determined four entrepreneurial key constructs, like activities, actors, resources, and approach formularization, to manage the challenges and needs of key accounts (Workman, Homburg and Jensen, 2003). Further on, Dirk Zupancic defined five corporate dimensions for key account management, such as “strategy”, “solution”, “people”, “management”, and “screening”, which have varying levels of relations to operational key account management (individual level, including actors and activities) and corporate key account management (organisational level, including integration and alignment, etc.) (Zupancic, 2008). Key account management orientation KAMO, published by Spiro Gounaris, integrates the attitude-related values of customer orientation, top-management commitment and inter-functional coordination and the behaviour-

related values of ability to customization, top-management involvement and inter-function. This model is validating a framework capturing a system of values that reflect the supplier's willingness and ability to respond effectively to key accounts' needs support (Gounaris and Tzempelikos, 2012) (Gounaris and Tzempelikos, 2013). A similar framework on intra-organisational determinants, such as organizational integration, support capabilities, performance management, team profile and skills, has been published by Kaj Storbacka regarding strategic account management programs (Storbacka, 2012). Further configurational frameworks and concepts regarding key account management have been published, focusing mainly on implementation/transitioning (Nätti and Palo, 2012) (Davies and Ryals, 2009), alignment (Leischnig, Ivens, Niersbach et al, 2018) (Guenzi, Pardo and Georges, 2007), performance (Ivens, Pardo, Niersbach et al, 2016b) (Zupancic, 2008) (Richards and Jones, 2009). These concepts of different organisational frameworks elucidate that all approaches are following the 7-S framework from Robert H. Waterman, where organisational determinants and factors have been investigated regarding key account management. Surprisingly, all the published configurational concepts and frameworks cover these organisational questions in terms of key account management: "How is it organized", "What is the practice", "How is it differentiated", "How is it connected", "What is done", "Who does it", "With whom is it done", and "How formalized is it". These reflections of the organisational status of key account management underlie a bilateral point of view between supplier and key account management, where only the organisational structures, functions, processes and practices have been considered. This focus is covering only scientific questions in terms "What", "How", and "Who" regarding the organisational interaction and the interface between supplier and key account management. Therefore, a more multilateral point of view is necessary to understand the full picture key account management as the key accounts have a major influence and impact on the strategic and operational approach of key account management (Black and Mendenhall, 1990). Of course, the implementation, alignment, support etc. are the basic organisational factors to bring key account management program to work, but the key accounts as an external variable might change and influence significantly the configurational concepts of key account

management. Therefore, the interface and interaction between supplier and key account requires the best strategic, tactical, and operational “fit” in relationship marketing, personal selling, and organizational-level resource allocation (Richards and Jones, 2009). This multi-lateral point of view between supplier, key account management, and key accounts enables a more comprehensive view on collaborative orientation, configuration, alignment, capabilities and performance (Hui Shi, Zou and Cavusgil, 2004). As above described, managing key accounts underlies geographical as well as cross-cultural dimensions regarding domestic and non-domestic marketing relationships. Thereby, the cross-cultural competence of organisations in terms of the conceptualization and execution of cross-cultural customer's experience management is the most important circumstance in the era of globalization of key account management (Sheth and Sharma, 1997). Therefore, the actual scholarly literature is inadequate to draw a configurational framework and roadmap on the cross-cultural and cross-national relationship in key account management focusing on the impact of cultural perceptions, behaviours, attitudes etc. Now, a systematic investigation regarding a larger cross-culture study or meta-analysis is missing or not yet published. This circumstance raises questions for future research activities and objectives:

- What is the impact of cross-culture and psychic distance on key account management regarding relationship management on key accounts?
- Is there a difference in the failure or success rate of key account management between different cultures?
- Which cultures are more eligible to practice key account management and why others do not?
- What are the organisational requirements and challenges to implement and establish key account management in different cultures? Are there different barriers or resistance to key account management?
- What is the impact of the psychic distance in the strategic and operational direction of key account management at the national and international level?



## 5 Research hypotheses

A research hypothesis is a specific and predictive statement about the possible outcome of the scientific research study based on a particular characteristic of the study population, such as presumed differences between groups on a particular variable or relationships between variables (Lavrakas, 2008). Therefore, the research hypotheses can be considered as one of the most important steps in planning a scientific quantitative research study by stating a priori expectation about the results of the study.

The present study is based on the stated hypotheses below, whereas all statements cover relationships between measurable variables, which can be clearly tested with statistical methods (see Chapter 6). The development of the present research hypotheses is based on the investigation of the current literature in key account management, focusing on cross-culture management (see chapter 3 and chapter 4). Second, the present research hypotheses also rely on common feedback and experiences of practitioners in the area of global key account management.

Overall, eleven hypotheses have been developed to determine the design of the present research study (see table 2). In detail, those hypotheses are categorized into five different subjects. Hypotheses for 'Demographics of the respondents' have the purpose of testing relationships of stated demographic factors related to the key account management. Furthermore, hypotheses for 'Society and culture' have the purpose of testing relationships of stated cultural dimensions related to the key account management approach. Hypotheses for 'Organisation and corporate management' aim to analyse the relationships of stated intraorganizational factors to the key account management approach. Finally, the last five hypotheses focus on the relationship of corporate and individual cross-cultural factors to the implementation and institutionalization of a key account management approach.

The statistical methodology for testing hypotheses will be described in chapter 6 'Research methodology'. The interpretation of the outcome of the hypotheses will be described in chapter 7 'Results'.

### Demographics of the respondents

**Hyp1:** The educational background, the level of international experiences, and the usage of particular customer communication tools can be used to differentiate key account professionals from other sales positions.

**Hyp2:** The perception and execution of key account management as a corporate sales function behaves geographical and cultural-religious distinctions. A general assumption that key account management is equally accepted and used throughout all geographies cannot be considered.

### Society and culture

**Hyp3:** The investigated geographical regions including their cultural-religious backgrounds differ from each other due to their varying manifestation of cultural dimensions.

**Hyp4:** A dominate cultural dimension in terms of greatest variations between the various backgrounds is not existent as all cultural dimensions are nearly equally effected.

### Organisation and corporate management

**Hyp5:** Key account management is mainly implemented and executed in larger international enterprises with market access in health care and pharmaceutical business.

**Hyp6:** Only companies with a strive for performance, a mindset of teamwork/group cohesion and a clear allocation of task and responsibilities meet the corporate requirements the manage key account.

### Cross-cultural management of key accounts

**Hyp7:** The management of key accounts is a fully integrated corporate direction throughout all department to serve adequately high value customers, clients and business partners.

**Hyp8:** Enterprises with integrated KAM programs consider cross-cultural differences in their customer relationship management, and sales force development and training.

**Hyp9:** The corporate consideration of cross-cultural diversity would significantly improve the performance and capabilities of the respective company.

### Cross-cultural skills for key account managers

**Hyp10:** Cross-cultural skills for key accounts are a mix of emotional, intellectual, and experiential capabilities and competencies instead of a single predominate aptitude.

**Hyp11:** A strong physical stamina is less important for the cross-cultural capabilities and competences of key account managers.

Table 2: Research hypotheses

## 6 Research methodology

### 6.1. Introduction

The research methodology for this study is based on the established and commonly used research concept by Mark Saunders (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Saunders sees research as a systematic learning process of individuals to increase their knowledge in a pre-defined area of investigation. This concept is commonly known as the 'research onion', where several layers of considerations must be employed when conducting research, including research philosophy, research approach, research strategy, choices, time horizons, and data collection/analysis. Therefore, this proposed view on developing research determines the process of formulating and executing the appropriate research methodology (Al-Zefeiti and Mohammad, 2015) (see figure 6). This introductory chapter will discuss objectively relevant aspects of the 'layers of the research onion' in terms of consistency and integrity:

- *Research philosophy* – It is symbolising the outer layer of the 'research onion' and describes the beliefs about how data about a phenomenon should be gathered, analysed, interpreted and concluded. Therefore, research philosophy is the starting point of the research process to define source, nature and development of knowledge (Bajpai, 2011). Focusing on the research scope and goals, 'pragmatism', 'positivism', 'realism', and 'interpretivism' are considered as the four major branches in research philosophy in business studies (Goddard and Melville, 2011). 'Positivism' as a philosophical theory of science, mainly natural science, is following the objectively view that only "true-to-fact" knowledge can be gained through quantifiable observations and measurements of large sample sizes to finally support the interpretation through reason and logic to form a conclusive form of knowledge, like laws of physics (Yang, Lee and Tzeng, 2008). In comparison, 'interpretivism' can be considered as the antithesis to 'positivism' as this philosophical theory of science, common in social sciences, considered the researcher and the human subject as the instruments to measure a certain phenomenon. This means, the 'interpretivism' proceed on the assumption that "access to reality (given or socially

constructed) is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, and instruments” (Myers, 2008). ‘Interpretivists’ are using mainly qualitative research methodologies, like unstructured interviews or participants observations to gain an empathetic understanding of individuals who react to external social factors. (Punch and Oancea, 2014). In contrast, ‘realism’ as a research philosophy proceed on the assumption of the independence of the reality from human thoughts and beliefs (Novikov, 2019). Therefore, ‘realism’ shares aspects form positivism and interpretivism in kind of understanding human subjects socially or historically by influencing factors like social forces, structures or processes (House, 1991). Typical research tools are qualitative as well as quantitative methodologies which fit the subject matter, focusing on in-depth analysis of pre-existing and emerging structures and processes (Savage, 1990) (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Also, ‘pragmatism’ as a research philosophy “recognises that there are many different ways of interpreting the world and undertaking research, that no single point of view can ever give the entire picture and that there may be multiple realities” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Therefore, ‘pragmatism’ is often using mixed methods of research, which accepts concepts to be relevant only if they support actions (Biesta, 2010).

- *Research approach* – It is symbolising the second outer layer of the ‘research onion’ and determines the processes and steps of data collection, analysing and interpretation (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Focusing on the research scope and goals, the ‘deductive approach’ and ‘inductive approach’ can be considered as the main two directions within the research. The ‘deductive approach’ describes a conceptual framework of developing a hypothesis regarding a pre-existing theory, which we will be investigated during the research study. Therefore, the deductive approach is most likely a ‘positivist’ research philosophy, where gained information from the research will be tested against established knowledge models (Snieder and Lerner, 2014) (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009) (Kapoor and Saigal, 2013).

In contrast, the 'inductive approach' does not follow a particular framework as observations and findings are considered as the starting point to create new theories or modify established models. The explicit research focus will be determined after data collection and the recognition of specific patterns so that a general finding can be formulated (Flick, 2015) (Beiske, 2007). For both research approaches, qualitative as well as quantitative research methods can be considered as valid methodologies. Quantitative research, as a more numeric method, is focusing on a larger scale of data or respondents, which can be validated through statistical tests in terms of statistical significances (Goddard and Melville, 2001). Common types are surveys and questionnaires. Whereas qualitative research, as a less numerical methodology, is more used for the understanding of people's beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behaviours, and interactions (Pathak, Jena and Kalra, 2013). Common types are interviews and focus groups of 5-10 respondents.

- *Research strategy* – It is symbolising a step-by-step action plan to provide a clear direction of research in terms of gathering research data with an appropriate timing, quality, and significance. The research strategy determines the way to meet the research goals and objectives by using existing data, identification of knowledge gaps, and maximising research resources. Therefore, experimental studies, surveys, case studies, ethnographical studies, literature research etc. should be considered in the formulating of a research strategy (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009).
- *Choices* – It is symbolising one of the inner layers of the 'research onion' and determines the outline of the research regarding the selection of appropriate methods. A mono-method is focusing only on one research approach, whereas a mixed method is using qualitative and quantitative research tools. Also, the multi-method approach is focusing on increasing the possibilities to gather more detailed results by applying more methodologies on a previously generated phenomenon or outcome. Mix methods are part of a multi-methodology approach (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018) (Yvonne Feilzer, 2010).
- *Time horizon* – It is one of the cores of the 'research onion' and determines the time framework of the research in terms of cross-sectional and longitudinal approaches. A

cross-sectional horizon is considered as a time frame, where data must be collected to investigate a particular phenomenon, whereas a longitudinal approach is focusing on a repeat data collection where timing might be a significant factor of the research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009).

- *Data collection and analyses* – It is symbolising the core of the ‘research onion’ and can be considered as the starting point for the execution of the research. Therefore, two different approaches are existing for data collection and analyses: primary data and secondary data. Primary data are original data that have been collected for specific research questions by using appropriate research methodologies. This data of new knowledge can be used from the research community for further investigations whereas second data are data, which have been originally collecting for a different purpose and reused for another research objective (Hox and Boeije, 2005).

Furthermore, sample selection and sample size play a crucial factor in the data collection and analyses as the samples must represent a population, where the research study will take place. Therefore, this subset of individuals should project most widely the characteristics of the whole population. Regarding the sample size as an “important feature of any study or investigation in which the aim is to make inferences about the population from a sample. In general, the sample size used in a study is determined based on the cost of data collection and based on sufficient statistical power” (Singh and Masuku, 2014). For qualitative research, the sample size is intending to be small as the measures of utility of results is based on transferability compared to the generalizability of quantitative research approaches (Marshall, 1996). Sampling technique is considered as a crucial element in the research approach as it has to make sure that every element of the population gets an equal chance to be part of the selected sample. Therefore, a different sampling approach is established, including random sampling, stratified sampling, cluster sampling, systematic clustering, convenience sampling, purposive sampling etc. (Kotrlik and Higgins, 2001).

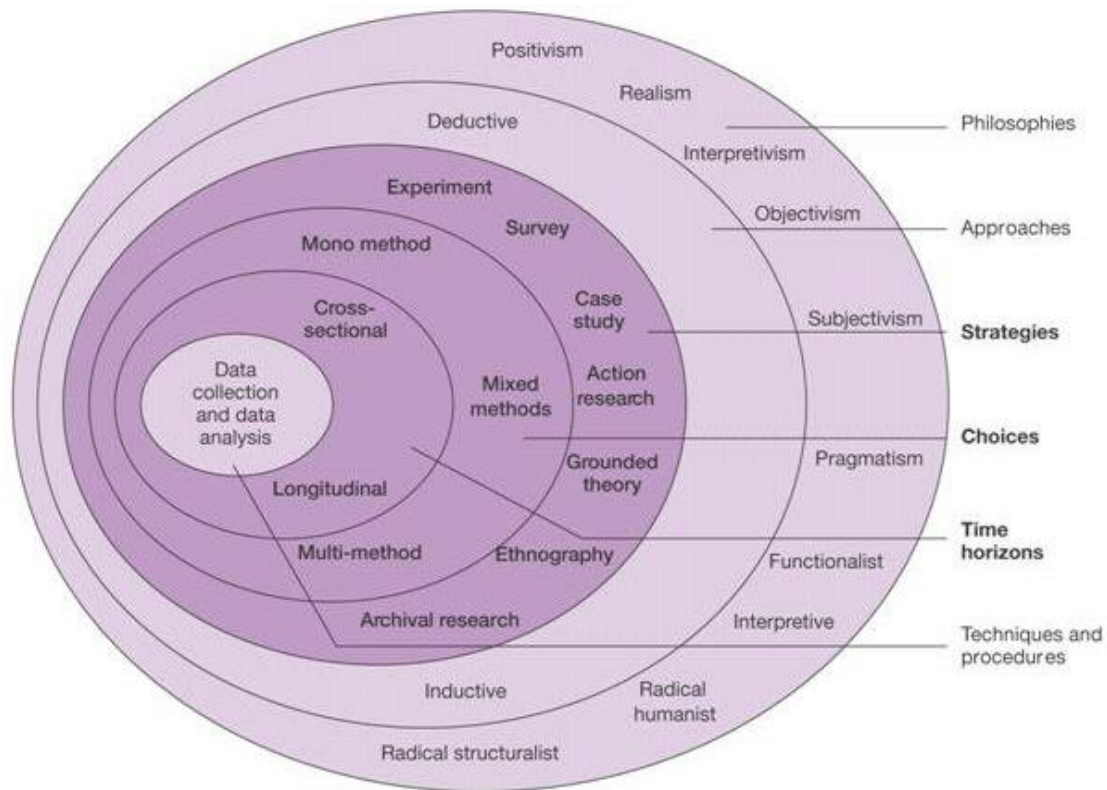


Figure 6: Research Onion (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009)

## 6.2. Research approach

For this study, the research approach is following a hypothetic-deductive research approach. Therefore, research hypotheses have been used to conduct this study. General findings and prominent patterns of the study have been used to develop a new scholarly perspective on the research subject. Therefore, a quantitative research methodology in terms of a questionnaire was primarily used to provide evidence-based answers to the research questions (Spaulding, Lodico and Voegtler, 2013).

## 6.3. Research strategy

For this study, the research strategy is following a quantitative research, using a questionnaire for collecting primary data from respondents with clear instructions to indicate their agreement or otherwise to structured questions by ticking, ranking or rating the preferred options to the various questions asked by the investigators (Horn, Chartered Institute of and Development,

2012) (Brace, 2018) (Raimi and Adebakin, 2013). Furthermore, questionnaires are considered as an instrument that provides a communication medium for the researchers and their respondents as the questionnaire could be open-ended, closed-ended, researcher-administered, self-completed, web/computer-aided, mailed, telephone and in-house survey questionnaires (Babbie, 2018) (Denscombe, 2009). Preferable, questionnaires can be administered anonymously, which encourage respondents to be truthful. Furthermore, questionnaires are economical to contact many respondents who are geographically distant (Patten, 2017). In addition, questionnaires are comfortable for respondents as they can complete it when it suits them (Gillham, 2015). Therefore, online questionnaires are rapidly gaining popularity in both academic and non-academic world for a low-cost method and speedy response from geographically dispersed participants (Sue and Ritter, 2011). In this study, the selection of online questionnaires as compared to other techniques is purposely to maximise the return rate and given that many organisation and individuals have good connections to the Internet (Gray, 2014).

## 6.4. Designing questionnaire

### 6.4.1. Research data

The required research data for this study are based on primary and secondary data. Primary data, as the outcome of already completed research programs, is the foundation of this deductive research study. As the deductive method is referred to as moving from the general to the particular by formulating specific research questions and hypothesis first. At the same time, the secondary data have been used for exploratory purposes of the scholarly literature to gain insight into techniques, measurements and statistical tools which have been used in previous cross-culture studies (Babbie, 2018) (Gray, 2014). The process of developing valid and reliable survey questions was following the workflow shown in figure 7.



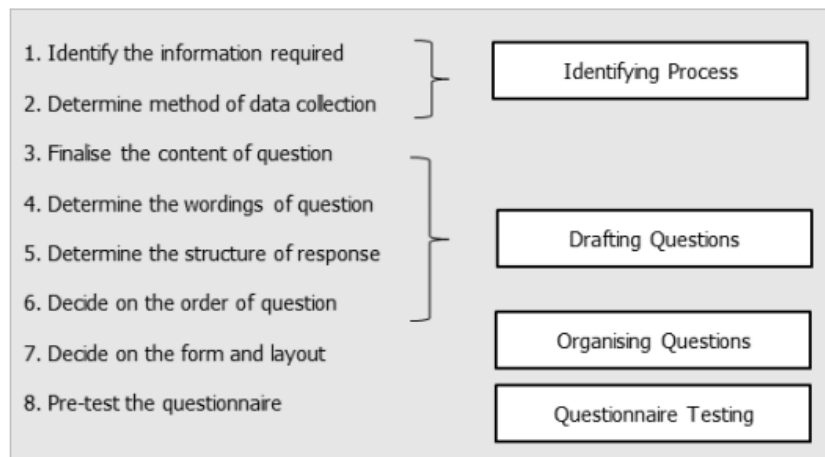


Figure 7: Workflow for designing survey questions (Awang, 2012)

#### 6.4.2. Identifying process

The identifying process is aimed to define the domain of the questionnaire in terms of a clear direction of what should be investigated and what has been investigated in the past. Therefore, this step requires gathering information from scholarly literature in terms of primary and secondary research sources. For this study, the research domain was focusing on cross-cultural industrial relationship marketing in terms of global and international business-to-business and business-to-customer management. Considering the objectives of this study, three subdomains have been identified:

1. **Corporate level:** This term describes the organisational awareness and capabilities for the implementation and institutionalization of cross-cultural key account management.
2. **Individual level:** This term describes the individual awareness and ability for sales professionals to manage key accounts in a cross-cultural context.
3. **Customer level:** This term describes the respective geographic and cultural-religious regions of the customers and business partners

#### 6.4.3. Drafting questions

The drafting stage is the most complex and time-consuming step in the design process of a questionnaire. In general, the questions represent the research domain of the questionnaire and lead the study outcome and conclusion significantly. For this study, five main categories

of questions have been used. Factual questions, such as demographical data, have been used to divide the group of respondents into clusters in order to see if their answers are different. Furthermore, this study contains questions about attitudes, opinions and beliefs. This type of question was used to assess a developed opinion from the respondents on a certain subject. Therefore, the scaled response in terms of five-point Likert questions was drafted to evaluate the individual opinion of the respondents on the impact of socio-cultural factors on the key account management. Finally, behaviour questions were also drafted to assess and classify characteristic types of behaviours of the respondents regarding their socio-cultural backgrounds and environment (Gillham, 2015). Regarding the question forms, the study mainly drafted closed-ended questions, as the respondents were asked to select an answer from among a list. Closed-ended questions were chosen to provide greater uniformity of response and can be easier processed and analysed after completing the study (Babbie, 2018). Open-Ended questions haven't been used in the questionnaire.

Regarding the wording of the questionnaire, the drafted questions have been designed for an easy understanding and meaning by avoiding scientific phrases and jargon. Furthermore, the questionnaire was designed to reduce social desirability bias, when respondents feel unwilling to admit certain behaviour or attitudes which might be socially unacceptable (Weisberg, Bowen and Krosnick, 1999).

For the first section 'Demographics', the questionnaire design found orientation on published guidance to improve the description of research samples (Fink, 2003). Therefore the demographic section builds the foundation for collecting information to answer, which can involve analysing demographic information to determine whether identity is causing an individual to do a specific thing (i.e., independent variable) or if something is causing an individual to adopt a certain identity (i.e., dependent variable) (Abdelal, Herrera, Johnston et al, 2012; Hughes, Camden and Yangchen, 2016). For the section 'Cultural and social profile', the process of drafting questions found orientation on previous research programs in the field of cross-cultural leadership and communication, such as from Geert Hofstede (Hofstede, 1980b), Shalom H. Schwartz (Schwartz, 1994), Ronald Inglehart (Inglehart, 1997), and finally

from the GLOBE study (House, 2014). Those studies and research efforts have been investigated and screened in order to build a comparable questionnaire design and structure. Furthermore, subject-related questions from those studies have been borrowed and subsequently modified in order to fit the objectives of this research study (Blair, Czaja, Blair et al, 2014). For the section 'Organisational profile' the questionnaire design found orientation on published work on company profile questionnaires and further adapted to the needs of this survey according to the business size, sector and area (1977). For the section 'organisational culture', the process of drafting questions found orientation on previous research programs in the field of cross-cultural leadership and communication, such as from Geert Hofstede (Hofstede, 1980b), Shalom H. Schwartz (Schwartz, 1994), Ronald Inglehart (Inglehart, 1997), and finally from the GLOBE study (House, 2014).

The questionnaire section 'Key account management' has found orientation on original publications related to this research subject. Those findings in publications have been further drafted as questions for the survey.

- Companies are not always aware of a strategic approach to select key accounts so that firms might work with "hidden key accounts" in relationship marketing (Piercy and Lane, 2006).
- Key account management underlies a commercial approach to serve high-potential, multi-location accounts with complex needs requiring individual attention through long-term and established relationships (Abratt and Kelly, 2002).
- The success and implementation of key account management are addicted to the organisational framework and individualized decision-making processes (Ivens, Pardo, Niersbach et al, 2016a) (Marcos-Cuevas, Nätti, Palo et al, 2014) (McDonald, Millman and Rogers, 1997) (Wengler, 2007).

A similar approach has been drawn for the questionnaire section 'Cross-cultural customer relationship' and 'Cross-cultural skills for key account managers'. Key findings in publications have been further drafted as questions:

- Specialised training and development programs for key account managers have an eminently positive effect in the success of key account management due to knowledge transfer about strategic key account analysis, planning, segmentation and penetration (De Alwis and Rajaratne, 2011) (Kurzrock, 1983).
- Insights and knowledge in cross-culture have to be transformed into practice in order to get greater depth and breadth (Black and Mendenhall, 1990). Modules of cross-cultural training should include the awareness of culture and cultural differences, the knowledge about different cultures, individual's emotion balance regarding inter-culture, and finally to practise various skills (Brislin and Yoshida, 1993).
- The performance is also subject to the individual feasibilities of intra-organisational communication, location and activation of resources and personnel to support the relationship marketing to key accounts (Ivens, Niersbach and Pardo, 2015) (Jones, Dixon, Chonko et al, 2005) (Ryals and Bruce, 2006) (Sengupta, Krapfel and Pusateri, 2000).
- The transfer of knowledge across nations and company site must be warranted to secure both long-term success and organisational learning for key account management (Cahill, 1998) (McDonald, Millman and Rogers, 1997) (Millman and Wilson, 1996) (Smith, 2009).
- Key account management requires cross-functional team collaboration as well as corporate coordination and harmonization (Fleischer, 2010).

The appendix one provides a detailed overview of the final questionnaire.

#### 6.4.4. Organising questions

A questionnaire has functioned as a set of questions in a predetermined design and structure. Therefore, designing a valid, reliable and objective questionnaire is essential before it is accessible to the study population in order to meet study goals and research objectives. Generally, the purpose of the survey is to answer the research questions that have been developed earlier in this study. The main idea and constructs for the questionnaire were based

on the extensive literature review and the researcher's experiences in the research area. Thus, five research sections in the cross-cultural management were identified, and the process of constructing each question was based on the identified theme. The survey was organised into six sections and consist of 46 questions. All the survey questions used a combination of nominal, ordinal and interval scale of measurement to comply with the data analysis requirement (Awang, 2012) (Yusof, 2018). The details of each section, as summarized in table 3 and appendix 1, are described as follows:

- **Section 1 – Demographics of the respondents**

The first section is intended to get the information about the respondents who supplied information to complete section 2, 3, 4 and 5. The major focus of this section is to gather data about their individual culture-religious backgrounds and their work experiences at business management. The design of this section is based on closed-ended questions and multiple-choice questions by using nominal scales.

- **Section 2 – Cultural and social profile**

The second section is to understand the regional characteristics of the respective culture and society, where the respondents work and fulfil their business obligations. The design of this section is mainly based on five-point Likert questions (ranging from 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree) to evaluate the respondent's opinion on their respective cultural profile.

- **Section 3 - Organisational profile and culture**

This section is intended to investigate the profile of the respective companies in terms of business size, business sectors, organisational culture, and industrial relationship management. The design of this section is based on nominal and ordinal scales, including closed-ended, and five-point Likert questions.

- **Section 4 – Key account management and cross-cultural relationship**

This section intended to investigate the customer relationship profiles of respondents according to the respective regional culture and organisational implementation of key account management. The design of this section is mainly based five-point Likert questions (ranging from 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree) to evaluate the respondent's opinion on their respective cross-cultural diversity between the organisation and key accounts.

- **Section 5 – Cross-cultural skills for key account managers**

This section intended to investigate the essential skillsets for key account managers to work in a cross-cultural business environment. The design of this section is mainly based five-point Likert questions (ranging from 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree) to evaluate the respondent's opinion on preferred cross-cultural competencies and skills for key account managers.

- **Section 6 – Providing personal contact details**

This section is intended to provide the participants with the opportunity to leave their contact details in terms of name and email address. This section is optional and not required to complete the questionnaire. This section aims to keep all participants updated regarding the study outcome.

Section	Description	Number of questions	Level of measurement	Statistical analysis
1	Demographics of the respondents	1-10	Nominal	Descriptive Crosstabulation
2	Cultural and social profile	11-19	Ordinal	
3	Organisational profile and culture	20-31	Nominal Ordinal	
4	Key account management and cross-cultural relationship	32-45	Ordinal	
5	Cross-cultural skills for key account managers	46	Ordinal	
6	Personal contact details		-	Informative

Table 3: Structure and layout of the questionnaire

#### 6.4.5. Questionnaire testing

Before executing the global study, the questionnaire was subjected to a pilot run where significant problems and issues should be identified and remedied. Therefore, a particular letter for the pilot was created to address the importance of the pilot to the participants regarding highlighting the opportunity to prove issues of clarity, comprehension, wording, design, and required time to complete the questionnaire. Finally, the letter comprised explicit hesitations and objections to questioning possible issues with the questionnaire. Furthermore, the pilot study was used to run a small-scale analysis using real data to ensure that all necessary data and information have been collected through the questionnaire. The feedback from the respondents and the results of the pilot study was used to refine and optimise the quality and scientific excellence of the questionnaire.

#### 6.4.6. Final version

The final version of the questionnaire was optimised according to the received feedback and pilot results and finally translated into Japanese, Chinese, and Spanish languages (see appendix 2-5).

#### 6.4.7. Publishing

The questionnaire was released as a web-based application using google forms (<https://www.google.com/forms>). This online questionnaire was accessible for participants from May 01, 2019, until September 01, 2019. The web-enabled questionnaire was hosted on a specific internet website to provide participants with easy access to the online questionnaires in English, Spanish, Chinese and Japanese (<https://www.kam-global-study.com/>). In addition to the online questionnaire, participants could find further information about the study aim, research design, and principal investigators.

## 6.5. Letter of invitation

The letter of invitation is aimed to encourage sales professionals to participate in the study. The letter of invitation was created to provide all interested participants with a comprehensive overview of the aim and the framework of the global study. The letter was created originally in the English language and finally translated into Japanese, Chinese, and Spanish (appendix 2-5).

## 6.6. Validity of the questionnaire

Validity refers to the degree to which the research concept is well-founded and likely provides a true picture of the observed phenomenon. Therefore, validity is a quality criterion to proof robustness and credibility of the applied scientific instruments to measure the phenomenon that has been researched, and the findings are likely to be valid (Wisker, 2008). Regarding the validity of this study, three major steps have been considered to secure the robustness and credibility of the questionnaire, in terms of content validity, construct validity, and concurrent validity (Litwin, 1995) (Bolarinwa, 2015) (Sarlis, 2014)

1. The objectives of the study were stated and defined very carefully.
2. The questionnaire was pre-tested and reviewed by volunteers and by members of staff, and a pilot study was undertaken.
3. Many questions were used from previous studies that had been used in different cultures, different environments, and at different times, a measure that contributed to constructing validity.

## 6.7. Reliability of the questionnaire

Reliability refers to the reproducibility of the questionnaire and therefore indicates whether the questionnaire performs consistently (Greco, Walop and McCarthy, 1987). Regarding the



reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha test has been used to determine the internal consistency and stability. The Cronbach's alpha is an index of reliability associated with the variation accounted for by the true score of the "underlying construct" (Santos, 1999). The alpha coefficient ranges in value from 0 to 1. A range of alpha of 0.6-0.7 indicates an acceptable level of reliability. Alpha values greater than 0.8 represents a higher level of reliability for the questionnaire. (Ursachi, Horodnic and Zait, 2015) (Hulin, Netemeyer and Cudeck, 2001).

## 6.8. Translation process

Indeed, English is the language of global communication and represents over 1.5 Billion speakers, whereas around 360 Million people speak English as their native language (De Swaan, 2013) (Crystal, 2000). The dominance of English in international business beyond dispute and confirm that English is an intrinsic part of communication in multinational settings and a fact of life for many business people (Nickerson, 2005).

Other languages like Chinese and Spanish are considered as the largest lingual groups as well, but the utilisation of these languages for global business communication is delimited to those respective linguistic geographies (Graddol, 2004) (Nunan, 2003). Therefore, the proficiency in speaking English for those cultural regions and areas is emerging over the last decades, but it is still lower compared to other western countries, such as Germany, Sweden, France, and Italy (EF English Proficiency Index, 2018). Therefore, when conducting global research with different cultural groups, it is necessary to adapt culturally and linguistically characteristics with appropriate instruments, such as survey translations (McGorry, 2000).

The translation for this questionnaire and the letter of invitation is based on 'forward and back translation' as this translation method is commonly recommended and used in cross-cultural research (Brislin, 1970). Therefore, this methodology for translation is aimed to increase the accuracy, clarity, and consistency of the information to make sure that the translation approach

doesn't have any significant impact upon the participants' understanding and response (Hilton and Skrutkowski, 2002) (Peters and Passchier, 2006) (Tyupa, 2011).

According to the global scale of the research study, the questionnaire and the letter of invitation needs be translated into Japanese, Chinese (simplified) and Spanish to adapt culturally and linguistically characteristics for those geographies with a significant lower understanding and proficiency in speaking the English language. Therefore, a cross-lingual questionnaire was mandatory to achieve scientific sustainable and comparable results of a field study (Chidlow, Plakoyiannaki and Welch, 2014). Initially, the questionnaire and the letter of invitation was developed and designed in the English language and afterwards, translated from English into Japanese, Chinese (simplified), and Spanish. The 'forward translation' was performed by native speakers with regional expertise of the respective linguistic geographies (Bradley, 1994). Afterwards, the translated questionnaires and letter of invitations were 'back-translated' by an expert certified translator into the English language. Subsequently, the 'back-translated' surveys and letters in the English language were analysed regarding authenticity and the originality for the translation and were modified to remove further discrepancies in the translation outcome. The approved translations were tested as a pilot using target population of ten of each linguistic geographies for Japanese, Chinese (simplified), and Spanish to identify some minor issues or changes (Peters and Passchier, 2006).

## 6.9. Sampling design

"Sampling concerns every aspect of how data are selected, out of all the possibilities that might have been observed, whether the selection process has been under the control of the investigators or has been determined by nature or happenstance, and how to use such data to make interferences about the larger population of interest" (Thompson, 2013). The sampling design describes the methodology for conducting a list of the population of the study, including sample frame, sample time and sample size. Furthermore, the sampling design describes the data selection process method of the study (Groves, Fowler, Couper et al, 2013).

#### 6.9.1. Population of the study

The population of the study contains individuals who are working currently as sales professionals in the business sectors of pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, diagnostics, and medical instrumentation. Around 34.000 key account managers have been identified globally (LinkedIn, 2019) and therefore considered as the target population for this study.

#### 6.9.2. Sampling frame

The sample frame is symbolising a detailed list of the target population of the study from which a study could conveniently draw its sample form and size (Lewis-Beck, Bryman and Liao, 2004). The sample frame for this global study covers the number of key account managers for each geography, including their primary business languages (see table 4).

<b>Geography</b>	<b>Key account manager</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Primary business languages</b>
Europe	8.500	25%	English, Spanish
Asia	11.900	35%	Chinese, Japanese, English
Middle East & Africa	1.700	5%	Arabic, English
North America	10.200	30%	English, Spanish
South America	3.400	5%	Spanish, English
<b>Total</b>	<b>34.000</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>-</b>

Table 4: Sampling frame of the target population of the study (status 08/03/2019)

#### 6.9.3. Sampling approach

For this quantitative study, two different sampling approaches have been selected:

- A) Probability sampling is considering that all members of the population have the same chance of being selected in the sample. Therefore, probability sampling is intended to be objective and driven by statistical interferences in kind of testing hypotheses (Babbie, 2018). Within the probability sampling, the web-enabled survey was using a list-based sampling via sending emails and social media invitations via LinkedIn (Fricker, 2008).

B) Non-probability sampling is considering that only a portion of the population has the chance of being selected in the sample as it might be difficult to reach out of all members of the population. Therefore, non-probability sampling is intended to be subjective and driven by analytical interferences in kind of generating hypotheses (Babbie, 2018). Within the non-probability sampling, the snowball sampling was used to generate referrals from initial respondents in order to identify additional respondents (Fricker, 2008).

#### 6.9.4. Sampling time

The sampling time describes the number of time points of the data collection, the impact of time in the accommodation of changes in the study, and the time frame or period of the data collection. (Pettigrew, 1990) (Meyer, 2001). The execution of the global study via web-enabled questionnaires was done continuously over a period of 6 months so that the data collection process was adjustable to different time zone, linguistic geographies, and personal preference of the potential participants.

#### 6.9.5. Sample size

For the determination of the sample size, the following formula has been used (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970):

$$s = X^2NP (1 - P) / d^2(N - 1) + X^2P(1 - P)$$

**s** = required sample size

**X<sup>2</sup>** = the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (3.841)

**N** = the population size.

**P** = the population proportion (assumed to be .50 since this would provide the maximum sample size).

**d** = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (.05).

According to the chosen degree of accuracy  $d$ , chi-square value  $\chi^2$ , a population size  $N$ , and population proportion  $P$ , the optimal sample size  $s$  for this quantitative study is calculated to be 380.

## 6.10. Data analysis and statistics

The data extracted from the web-enabled survey have been analysed using IBM® SPSS® Statistics Version 26.0. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to explain the data collected from the participants. In contrast, crosstabulation and frequency analyses of multiple variables were used to ascertain the pattern of data which can be grouped for further relationship and association analyses.

For the statistical analysis, the respective data was evaluated regarding Gaussian distribution by applying Kolmogorov–Smirnov–Tests. For normally distributed data, t-Tests (between two groups) or ANOVA-Tests (for multiple groups) have been used to identify significant differences between the means of groups. In contrast, for non-normally distributed data, Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney-Tests (between two groups) and Kruskal-Wallis-Tests (for multiple groups) have been used to identify significant differences between the means of groups. For testing hypotheses, Chi-squared Test ( $\chi^2$  test) and Friedman Rank-Tests have been used. The findings and outcome from the data analysis were deemed sufficient to provide answers to the research aim and questions. The complete results and analysis, as well the key findings selected for subsequent data collection, are outlined in chapter 7 of this thesis.

## 7 Results

### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter is focusing on the data analysis of the questionnaires according to the research aim and objectives. In sub-section 6.2, the questionnaire will be analysed according to the data collection process, response rates, and data treatment. Furthermore, sub-section 6.3 is presenting the demographics of the respondents. Sub-section 6.4 is analysing the questionnaire data regarding the cultural-social backgrounds of the respondents. Sub-section 6.5 is presenting the outcome for the questionnaire regarding organisational and corporate management. Finally, sub-section 6.6 and 6.7 are presenting results for cross-cultural management of key accounts and cross-cultural skills for key account managers, respectively.

### 7.2 Questionnaire

The primary data used for this quantitative analysis were collected using the web-enabled questionnaire instrument with 46 subject matter research questions. The final data collection period started on May 01, 2019 and finished on September 01, 2019. All the questionnaires (English, Spanish, Japanese and Simple Chinese) have been published on a dedicated public-accessible website for this research study: '<https://www.kam-global-study.com>' (see figure 8). This website was published first on April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019. The questionnaires got accessible on May 01, 2019, whereby they were already visible on the website. The questionnaires in English, Spanish and Japanese language were hosted on 'Google forms' for data collection and associated with this website. The questionnaire in Simplified Chinese language was hosted on a local Chinese service provider, called Wenjuan.com, as 'Google forms' and other non-Chinese survey providers have been blocked by the Chinese government and authority. The questionnaire in Simple Chinese was also linked to the website. All questionnaires were designed to be desktop and mobile-friendly. Furthermore, the website presented additional information about the research study to the website visitors and respondents, focusing on

research objectives and aims, the principal investigators and Anglia Ruskin University as the academic host.

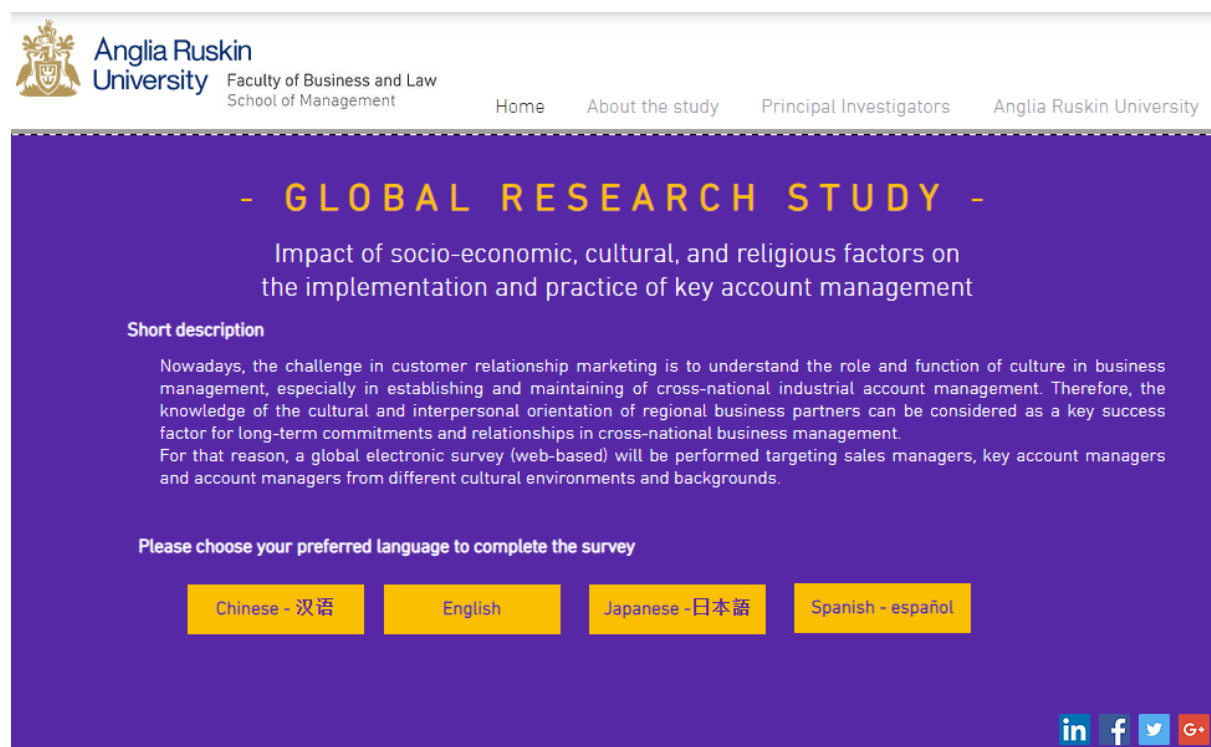


Figure 8: Public website to access the global research study

The data collection was concluded on September 01, 2019, at 23.59 pm-midnight. The generated data from the questionnaires were stored on 'Google sheets' from the 'Google forms questionnaires' (English, Spanish, Japanese) and on a 'Wenjuan' server for the Chinese version of the questionnaire. All data were downloaded as an Excel document (xls format) and exported into SPSS V26.0.0.0. for proper data coding, streamlining and computation of statistical results.

The questionnaire received 432 responses throughout all language-specific questionnaires. The questionnaires have been designed to minimise the total survey error by setting all questions as mandatory to avoid non-response errors. Furthermore, the questionnaires have been used closed-ended questions only in terms of multiple-choice or rating questions. Open-ended questions were not included in the questionnaires. Therefore, all submitted responses

between May 01, 2019 and September 01, 2019 were counted as valid responses for this research study.

With regards to the response rate, this study sets out with a sample size of 380 respondents. At the end of the data treatment, a total of 432 responses were qualified for data analysis. The variance between the sample size of 380 and the 432 actual responses represents a response rate of 113.68% ( $432/380 \times 100$ ). The daily response to the surveys was 3.54 (see figure 9).

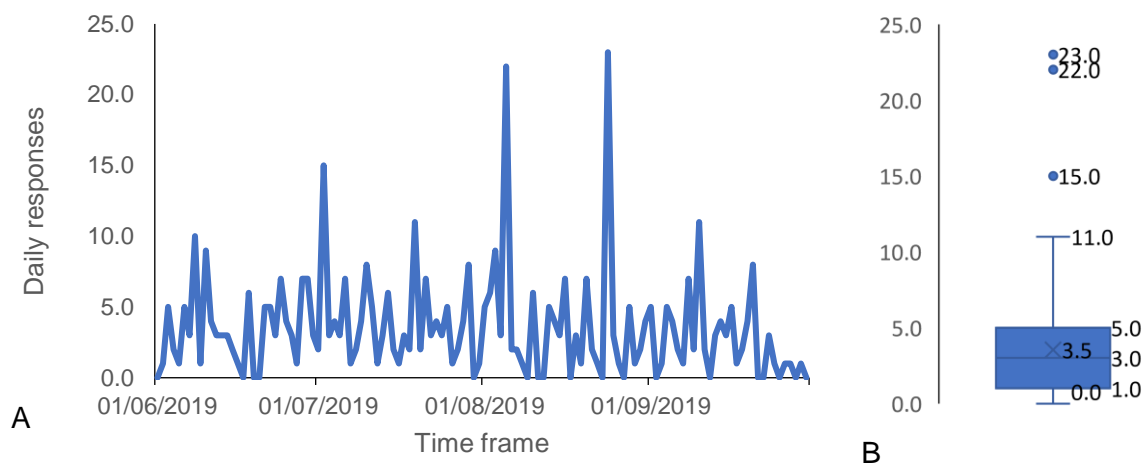


Figure 9: Number of daily responses (A) and Box plot analysis (B) of the data collection (sum of all responses throughout all questionnaires)

First, the questionnaires have been sent to the personal business network of the principal investigators for collecting the first responses. Further activities, such as writing posts and announcements on LinkedIn, e.g. in specialized focus groups for key account management, and Facebook demonstrated a strong effect to bring more visitors and respondents to the website and finally to complete the survey in their preferred languages. In China and Japan, Social Media like WeChat and LINE have been used to gain the attention of the research study to regional sales specialists and finally to gather enough responses from those geographical regions.



### 7.3 Demographics of the respondents

Demographics simply describes a target population based on collected data and information. The target population of this quantitative research is defined as the group of participants who completed the questionnaire successfully.

During the survey period, 432 valid responses have been collected throughout all questionnaires and therefore were accessible for the following descriptive and inferential statistics.

#### 7.3.1 Cultural-religious background

Around 30.6% of all participants define their cultural-religious background as 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic', followed by 'South-East Asia' with 25%, 'Western Industrial' with 22.2%, and 'Latin America' with 13.9%. Around 5.6% and 2.8% of responses came from participants with 'Jewish' and 'Slavic-Orthodox' cultural-religious backgrounds, respectively (see table 5). In conclusion, the population of this research study is characterized by various culture-religious backgrounds. Whereby the population for 'Jewish' and 'Slavic-Orthodox' is represented with lower response frequencies compared to the other cultural backgrounds.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Arabic Turkic-Islamic	132	30.6	30.6
Jewish	24	5.6	36.1
Latin America	60	13.9	50.0
Slavic-Orthodox	12	2.8	52.8
South-East Asia	108	25.0	77.8
Western Industrial	96	22.2	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>100.0</b>	-

Table 5: Frequencies for 'What is your culture-religious background?'

#### 7.3.2 Job function and role

The majority of the study population are working in the field of 'Key Account Sales' with 30.6%, followed by 'Business Development' with 15.3%, 'Inside Sales' with 13.9%, 'General Manager'

with 12.5% and 'Account Sales' with 11.1%. Other chosen job functions are 'National Sales' with 6.9% and 'President/Director of Sales' with 5.6% and finally 'CEO/Founder' with 4.2% (see table 6). In conclusion, most of the respondents with more than 40% are working directly in the area of key account and account sales. The minority of respondents have top-level leadership roles such as a 'President/Director' or 'CEO/Founder' who oversee and manage commercial aspects and efforts of key account and account sales, too.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Inside sales	60	13.9	56.9
Account sales	48	11.1	11.1
National sales	30	6.9	94.4
Key Account sales	132	30.6	87.5
Business Development	66	15.3	26.4
General manager	54	12.5	43.1
President/Director of sales	24	5.6	100.0
CEO/Founder	18	4.2	30.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 6: Frequencies for 'Which of the following sales positions best describes your current role function?'

### 7.3.3 Education level

Around 45.8% of the study population own a bachelor's degree as the highest educational degree. At the same time, 31.9% and 13.9% of all respondents have master/diploma and doctoral degree, respectively. Only 8.3% of the study population is characterized by a High school degree as the highest educational outcome. In 'Western Industrial' and 'South East Asia' regions, the population is characterized by a higher level of education in terms of master/diploma and doctoral degrees and noticeable less with High school degrees. Whereas respondents from 'Latin America' show the highest portion of High school degrees (50%) compared to other cultural-religious regions. Around 81.8% of participants from 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic' countries own a bachelor's degree, followed by master/diploma with 18.2%. The study population of 'Slavic-Orthodox' and 'Jewish' are too small to describe the demographics for those regions correctly as 100% of all respondents for 'Slavic-Orthodox' claims to have a

doctoral degree and 75% of all 'Jewish' participants own a master degree as the highest academic education.

In general, commercial roles focusing on key account sales, account sales, inside sales, and national sales, show a high level of academic graduation in terms of doctoral, master, diploma and bachelor's degrees. High school degrees as the highest educational level is under-represented in those job functions. Around 20% of participants with a national sales background have a doctoral degree followed by bachelor and master/diploma with each 40%. A high school degree as the highest education was not presented in this population. Furthermore, around 50% of all respondents with a key account focus have bachelor's degrees, followed by high school degrees with 27.3%, doctoral degrees with 13.6%, and master/diploma degrees with 9.1%. In direct comparison to the other job roles and functions, national sales and key account sales represent the highest level of university degrees with 100% and 72.7%, respectively. In contrast, inside sales and account sales do not show any doctoral degrees in this study population (see figure 10).

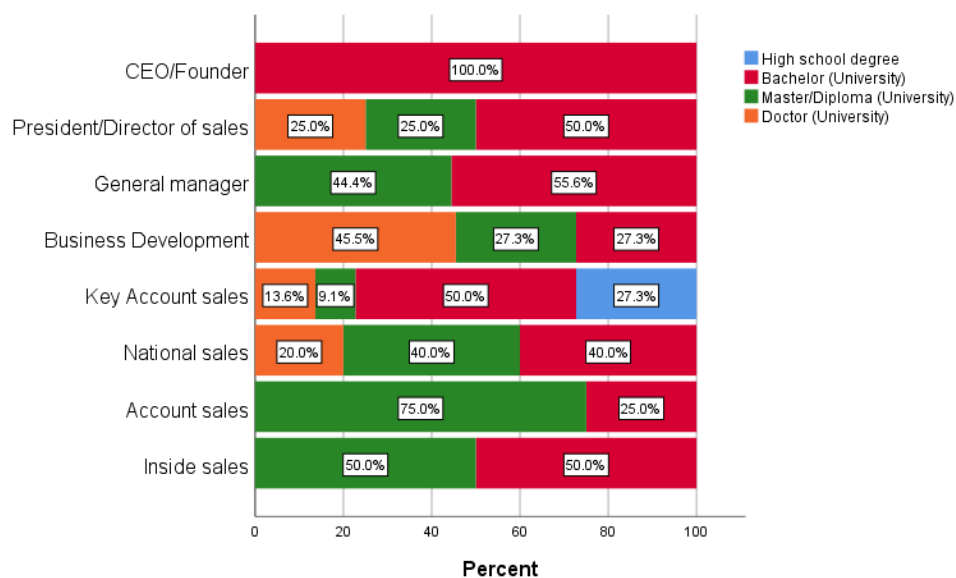


Figure 10: Educational level analysed by job role

#### 7.3.4 Living in a different cultural region

In general, 55.6% of the study population have not lived in a different cultural region for more than three years compared to 44.4% who did. Interesting to see, that 87.5% of all 'Western

Industrial' respondents did not live in another cultural-religious region. A similar picture can be drawn from 'Jewish' participants, where 75% did not have any experiences to work or live in another cultural-religious geography for more than three years. In contrast, the study population for 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic' and 'Latin America' showed that almost 50% already lived abroad in another cultural region and whereas the other 50% did not. Furthermore, the majority for 'Slavic-Orthodox' with 100% and 'South-East Asia' with 66.7% lived in the past for more than three years in another cultural-religious region.

In general, respondents with an international job function, such as CEO/Founder or key account sales show a higher percentage of experiencing living and working in other cultural-religious regions. Around 59.1% of participants with key account sales experiences and 100% of the CEO/Founders have lived abroad in another cultural region for more than three years. Participants with more regional sales roles, such as account sales, inside sales, national sales and general manager, tend to have lower experiences in living in another cultural geography. Therefore, the range for those population who have not lived in different cultural regions is between 50% and 87.5%.

### 7.3.5 The geographical direction of the job roles

Regarding the geographical direction, the study population for account sales described their job function to be more locally (operating in a specific geographic area of a country) with 87.5% as well regionally (operating in more than one country) with 12.5%. A similar picture can be drawn for respondents for national sales as they describe their job role to be locally (operating in a specific geographic area of a country) with 40%, nationally (operating for one country only) with 40% and regionally (operating in more than one country) with 20%. In comparison, the study population for inside sales has added an organisational orientation to their job function. Therefore, inside sales has been described to be local (operating in a specific geographic area of a country) with 50%, organisational (operating on specific valuable accounts/customers only) with 30%, and regional (operating in more than one country) with 20%. Furthermore, 'Key

account sales' has been described with a high percentage to be local of 45.5%, followed by national with 27.3%, organisational 18.2%, and international with 9.1%.

### 7.3.6 Level of business experiences

In general, job roles with top-level responsibilities and functions such as 'CEO/Founder', 'President/Director' and 'General Manager', show more than 15 years of sales experiences. In contrast, all other job roles demonstrated a variety of different level of sales experiences from 1 year to over 15 years. Around 70% of 'Inside sales' have sales experience of '1 to 3 years', which is the highest share of all sales roles. Respondents with a key account sales background show almost an equal distribution of sales experiences, such as 27.3% for '1 to 3 years', 22.7% for '4 to 6 years', 18.2% for '7 to 10 years', and 27.3% for '15 to 20 years'. None of the respondents has more than 21 years of experiences in sales. A similar share of years of experiences is also shown for 'National sales', 'Account sales' and 'Business development'.

### 7.3.7 International communication

Over 55% of the study population demonstrates a low level (up to 30%) of monthly communication to international customers, business partner, and clients abroad. Around 36% of the respondents claim to have higher monthly international communication and interaction with customers, business partner, and clients (up to 70%). Only 8% of the study population claims to have up to 71-100% monthly international communication to stakeholders.

Regarding the respective cultural-religious background, the study population from 'Latin America' seems to have fewer international touchpoints per month as the other regions. All the other cultural-religious backgrounds show an almost equal percental share of answers for each response option.

In general, job roles with top-level functions and international responsibilities, such as CEO/Founder, President/Director and General Manager, have to have a higher frequency for international communications to customers, business partner, and clients living abroad. The

study population for inside sales, key account sales and business development show almost an equal distribution of the frequencies for the monthly communication with an international character. Around 87% of respondents for account sales shows less than 10% international touchpoints per month.

#### 7.3.8 Communication tools

This sub-section is analysing the frequency of used communication tools of the target population, focusing on email, phone calls, client visits, instant messenger, fax, social media and blogs.

##### Communication via Email

It is obvious that email communication is one of the most used tools for sales professionals to interact with customers, clients or other business partners. All cultural-religious backgrounds show a majority for email communication as the most applicable working tool. However, it is also obvious that some respondents claim not to use email as a communication tool. The portion for those respondents for 'Western Industrial' and 'South East Asia' is still 12.5% and 11.1%, respectively. Regarding the job role, respondents for 'Inside sales', 'National sales', and 'CEO/Founder' demonstrate a share of over 60% for email communications only. Furthermore, responses for 'Key account sales' and 'Business development' also show a higher share of 31.8% and 18.2% for a minor role for email communication, respectively.

##### Communication via Instant messenger

Instant messenger as a communication tool seems to be popular for sales professionals in 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic' and 'South-East Asia' regions. Communication platforms such as 'WeChat', 'LINE', and 'WhatsApp' are already established and widely used as a commercial tool for client interaction and engagement in those regions. Less popular but not unimportant are instant messengers in 'Western Industrial', 'Slavic-Orthodox', and 'Latin America'. Only respondents with a 'Jewish' background declare that instant messengers do not play a major

role in customer communication. Regarding the job role, respondents for 'Inside sales', 'President/Director of sales' and 'CEO/Founder' assign instant messenger a minor role in their commercial communication to customers and clients, whereas other sales role are using frequently instant messengers. Especially, 'National account sales' declare a higher frequency of using Instant messengers in their monthly activities.

#### Communication via phone calls

Phone calls play a major role in communication and engagement with customers and clients. All cultural-religious regions are performing phone calls. Especially 'Slavic Orthodox' and 'Latin America' demonstrate the highest time spend of 60-100% for customer phone calls, followed by 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic', 'Western Industrial' and 'South-East Asia'. Only respondents with a 'Jewish' regional background are claiming to spend up to 20% of their time for phone calls. Especially over 80% of the respondents for 'National sales' perform up to 80-100% phone calls per month. Interesting to see is that around 40% of 'Inside sales' experiences only up to 20% monthly phone calls. In comparison, the respondents for 'CEO/Founder' claim that they have the lowest percentage and frequency for monthly phone calls. Key account professionals demonstrate an almost equal distribution of phone call usages.

#### Communication via customer visits

It is also evident that customer visits play a major role in communication and engagement with customers and clients. All cultural-religious regions are facing customer visits. Especially 'Latin America' and 'Slavic Orthodox' demonstrate the highest time spend of 40-80% for customer visits, followed by 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic' 'South-East Asia' and 'Western Industrial'. Only respondents with a 'Jewish' regional background are claiming to spend up to 20% of their time for client visits.

Job roles with a less of direct customer-facing activities, such as 'Inside sales', 'General manager', 'President/Director of sales', and 'CEO/Founder' show a lower percentage for customer visits. In direct comparison, 31%-40% of respondents for 'National sales' and 'Key

account sales', are claiming that they spend at least 80% of their time for client visits. Around 75% of the respondents for 'Account sales' using 61-80% of their time for customer visits.

#### Communication via Fax

Regarding Fax, almost all respondents assign fax a minor role in customer communication and engagement. Therefore, fax is getting obsolete in most of all culture-religious regions and job roles. Only in 'Latin America', respondents declare that fax will be used up to 80% in their monthly customer interactions. Some of the respondents for 'Key account sales' and 'Business Development' also using fax more often.

#### Communication via Social Media

Independent to the respective cultural-religious background, most of the respondents declare that Social Media have an underlining role for customer communications. Only responses from 'Slavic-Orthodox' regions showcase the usage of Social Media in their monthly communication to customer and clients by up to 40-60%. A similar picture can be drawn for the job role and function. Blogs are not used from respondents for 'CEO/Founder', 'President/Director of sales' and 'Account sales'. However, on the other hand, around 60% of respondents for 'Key account sales' and 'National sales' show a broader usage of Social Media in their interaction with clients and customer. Furthermore, around 35% of the respondents for 'General manager' and 'Business development' declare an appropriation of Social Media in their commercial activities.

#### Communication via Blogs

Regarding Blogs, almost all respondents assign Blogs a minor role in customer communication and engagement. Only in 'Latin America' and 'Western Industrial', Blogs show a more significant role in monthly customer interactions. Furthermore, job roles with direct customer-facing activities, such as 'Business development', 'Key account sales', 'National sales' are prone to using Blogs.



### 7.3.9 Summary & Hypotheses

The educational background, the level of international experiences, and the usage of particular customer communication tools are not reliable differentiators between 'Key account sales' and other job functions. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 'The educational background, the level of international experiences, and the usage of particular customer communication tools can be used to differentiate key account professionals from other sales positions.' has to be rejected. In contrast, the geographical direction of the job role indicated that 11.1% of all key account professional are global key account managers and 88.9% are national key account managers. Furthermore, the results also demonstrate that key account management is omnipresent in all cultural regions and therefore, can be considered as a general accepted commercial concept in the management of high-value accounts and customers across geographies. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 'The perception and execution of key account management as the function of a corporate sale behoves geographical and cultural-religious distinctions. A general assumption that key account management is equally accepted and used throughout all geographies can be considered.' can be accepted.

## 7.4 Society and culture

This section is aimed to describe and analyse the respective cultural-religious regions according to societal parameters and indicators, such as regional beliefs, behaviours, values, norms, rules, laws and ways of doing things (Minkov and Hofstede, 2011). Therefore, this sub-investigation of the different cultural-religious backgrounds will help this research study to understand the impact of those socio-cultural variables on intra-organisational determinants to implement, institutionalize and execute key account management. In conclusion, this section is based on the research concept of dimensionalizing of cultures by Geert Hofstede (Hofstede, 2011) and by the GLOBE study (House, Hanges, Javidan et al, 2004), which are focusing on 'Power Distance Index', 'Performance Orientation', 'Uncertainty Avoidance', 'Humane Orientation', 'Institutional Collectivism', 'In-Group Collectivism', 'Assertiveness', and 'Future

Orientation'. Therefore, nine questions have been formulated for this section of the questionnaire (see table 7).

Cultural Dimension	Questions
Uncertainty Avoidance	In my society, societal requirements and instructions are spelt out in detail, so citizens know what they are expected to do. In my society, rules or laws cover almost all situations
Power Distance	In my society, rank and position in the hierarchy have special privileges.
In group collectivisms	In my society, being accepted by the other members of a group is very important.
Human orientation	In my society, it is improper to express feelings in public
Institutional collectivism	In my society, people embark on common goals without being so concerned with what is Good and what is Bad
Assertiveness	In my society, the most effective way to change a political system is through public debates and free elections
Future orientation	In my society, more people live for the present than live for the future
Performance orientation	In my society, major rewards are based on only performance effectiveness

Table 7: Overview of questions regarding their respective cultural dimensions

#### 7.4.1 Uncertainty avoidance

Regarding the dimension of 'Uncertainty Avoidance', the questionnaire contains two closed-end questions via Likert-rating from 1 (totally agree) to 5 (totally disagree):

- In my society, societal requirements and instructions are spelt out in detail, so citizens know what they are expected to do.
- In my society, rules or laws cover almost all situations.

The index 'Uncertainty Avoidance' as a cultural indicator is dealing with a society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity and refers therefore to the culture's level of tolerance or comfort for ambiguity, uncertainty, and unstructured situations. It is "the extent to which a society, organization, or group relies on social norms, rules, and procedures to alleviate the unpredictability of future events" (House, Hanges, Javidan et al, 2004).

The results for 'In my society, societal requirements and instructions are spelt out in detail, so citizens know what they are expected to do' can demonstrate a clear difference between the cultural-religious backgrounds. Especially the population for 'Western Industrial' with an average of 2.1 and 'Jewish' with an average of 2.0 agree much stronger to this statement compared to the other cultures and societies. Especially respondents from 'South-East Asia' with an average of 2.9 and 'Slavic-Orthodox' with an average of 3.0 might see difficulties in their societies regarding making aware of societal requirements and instructions. Overall, these results are clearly showing a different individual perception of uncertainty and ambiguity regarding the societal requirements and instructions. 'Western Industrial' and 'Jewish' are more aware of societal requirements and instructions compared to the others.

The results for the second question 'In my society, rules or laws cover almost all situations', implies, that especially the population for 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic' with an average of 2.8 and 'Slavic-Orthodox' with an average of 3.0 believe that their societies are less regulated with rules and laws for almost all situations. In contrast, respondents from 'Western Industrial' and 'South-East Asia' agree more for their legislative measures for almost all situations. Overall, these results show a different individual perception of uncertainty and ambiguity regarding the legislative measures in their respective nationalities as well as cultural regions. It seems that 'Western Industrial' and 'South-East Asia' have stronger legislative instrumentation to cover almost all situations.

In conclusion, the results for the 'Uncertainty Avoidance' questions demonstrate a difference between the cultural-religious backgrounds in terms of feeling threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations. The population of 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic' and 'Slavic-Orthodox' show the highest index for uncertainty due to low awareness of societal requirements/instructions and less legislative measures for their daily life. In contrast, the respondents for 'Western Industrial' know their societal requirements and experience a high coverage of legislative measures. Therefore, the uncertainty index is the lowest under all investigated cultural backgrounds. A similar picture can be drawn for the population for 'Jewish' regarding the uncertainty level. Whereas the population for 'South-East Asia' presents a higher uncertainty level for their

societal requirements, but on the other hands, they perceive the highest legislative measure and coverage. The 'Uncertainty Avoidance' for 'Latin America' has a middle position of all investigated cultural-religious background.

#### 7.4.2 Power distance

Regarding the dimension of 'Power Distance', the questionnaire contains one closed-end questions via Likert-rating from 1 (totally agree) to 5 (totally disagree):

- In my society, rank and position in the hierarchy have special privileges.

The 'Power Distance' indicates the distribution of power and wealth between individuals in a culture, society or nation. Overall, the 'Power Distance' provides evidence of the extent to which regular citizens, or subordinates, will follow the whims of an authoritative figure. Therefore the level of the 'Power Distance' explains "how the culture tolerates and fosters pecking orders, and how active members try to reduce them" (Andrews and Mead, 2009).

The results for 'In my society, rank and position in the hierarchy have special privileges' demonstrate a clear difference between the cultural-religious backgrounds. Especially, respondents from 'Latin America' with an average of 1.5, 'Jewish' with an average of 1.8, and 'Arabic Turkish-Islamic' with an average 2.1 confirm that in their cultural region people with a higher hierarchical rank and position own special privileges. In direct contrast, the population for 'Slavic-Orthodox' with an average of 3.0, 'Western Industrial' with an average of 2.8, and 'South-East Asia' with an average of 2.6 are facing fewer experiences and impact of the inequality in distribution on power in their societies.

In conclusion, the societies of 'Latin America', 'Jewish', and 'Arabic Turkish-Islamic' intent are more likely to conform to a hierarchy where people with rank position have their privileged places. Furthermore, the societies of 'Slavic-Orthodox', 'Western Industrial', and 'South-East Asia' tend to try to distribute power equally.

#### 7.4.3 In-group collectivism

Regarding the dimension of 'In-group collectivism', the questionnaire contains one closed-end questions via Likert-rating from 1 (totally agree) to 5 (totally disagree):

- In my society, being accepted by the other members of a group is very important.

'In-group collectivism' can be described as the degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty and cohesiveness in their organizations or families (House, Hanges, Javidan et al, 2004). Therefore, 'In-group collectivism' is focusing on the level of independence and autonomy of individuals and people's identity regards group membership.

The results for 'In my society, being accepted by the other members of a group is very important.' can demonstrate a difference between the cultural-religious backgrounds. Especially, the respondents with a 'Jewish' background confirm that it is important to be accepted by other members of a group. They demonstrated the highest value of 1.5 for this question. Whereas, responses from 'Slavic-Orthodox' with an average of 3.0 and 'South-East Asia' with an average of 2.7 are facing lower importance of in-group acceptance. 'Western Industrial', 'Latin America', and 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic' show a similar rating picture between 2.0 and 2.4, respectively.

In conclusion, the outcome of this question symbolizes that some cultural-religious backgrounds are facing higher in-group collectivism, such as 'Jewish' and 'Latin America', where people emphasize relatedness with groups and accept duties/obligations as important factors of the social group behaviour. In contrast, other backgrounds, like 'South-East Asia' and 'Slavic-Orthodox', show lower in-group collectivism, where people emphasize more rationality in behaviour and focus more on personal needs and attitudes.

#### 7.4.4 Human orientation

Regarding the dimension of 'Human orientation', the questionnaire contains one closed-end questions via Likert-rating from 1 (totally agree) to 5 (totally disagree):

- In my society, it is improper to express feelings in public.

"Humane orientation" is defined as "the degree to which an organization or society encourages and rewards individuals for being fair, altruistic, friendly, generous, caring, and kind to others" families (House, Hanges, Javidan et al, 2004). Overall, 'Humane Orientation' is focusing on the level of expressing feelings, emotions, greetings, welcome, concern, and appreciation in most of the societal interactions.

The results for 'In my society, being accepted by the other members of a group is very important.' demonstrate a difference between the cultural-religious backgrounds. Especially, respondents with 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic' and 'Slavic-Orthodox' backgrounds confirm the statement with an average of 2.6 and 2.5, respectively, that it is improper to express emotions in public. Surprisingly, 'Latin America' with an average of 3.0 has a middle position of the rating. Whereas, the study population for 'Western Industrial', 'South-East Asia', and 'Jewish' disagree with an average of 3.6, 3.3, and 4.3, respectively.

In conclusion, the population with an 'Arabic-Turkic Islamic' and 'Slavic-Orthodox' background is facing a lower level of 'Humane Orientation', which describe a culture where the expression of nonverbal signs, greetings and welcome only takes place at formal interactions and talking about feelings in public is not predominate. Whereas the population for 'Western Industrial', 'South-East Asia', and especially 'Jewish' is showing a higher level of 'Humane Orientation', where the express and display of feelings and emotions in public is part of their society and cultural environment.

#### 7.4.5 Institutional collectivism

Regarding the dimension of 'Institutional collectivism', the questionnaire contains one closed-end questions via Likert-rating from 1 (totally agree) to 5 (totally disagree):

- In my society, people embark on common goals without being so concerned with what is Good and what is Bad.

'Institutional collectivism' is defined as "the degree to which organizational and societal institutional practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action" (House, Hanges, Javidan et al, 2004). In detail, 'Institutional collectivism'

refers to the basis upon which decisions are made, and the group's resources are allocated regarding the support, value and preference to distribute rewards based on group versus individual interest.

The results for 'In my society, people embark on common goals without being so concerned with what is Good and what is Bad' can demonstrate a difference between the cultural-religious backgrounds. Especially, participants with 'Jewish' cultural background disagree with an average of 4.3., followed by 'Western Industrial' with 3.6, and 'South East Asia' with 3.3. In contrast, the study population for 'Latin America' slightly agree with an average of 2.5 to this statement. Participants from 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic' and 'Slavic-Orthodox' demonstrated a neutral position with an average of 2.9 and 3.0, respectively.

In conclusion, the participants with 'Jewish' background are more focused on individual interest rather follow the preference and value of a group. A similar picture is seen for 'Western Industrial' and 'South-East-Asia', where participants slight disagrees with the statement. On the opposite, participants from 'Latin America' are more willing to follow values and preference of groups instead of individual interest.

#### 7.4.6 Assertiveness

Regarding the dimension of 'Assertiveness', the questionnaire contains one closed-end questions via Likert-rating from 1 (totally agree) to 5 (totally disagree):

- In my society, the most effective way to change a political system is through public debates and free elections.

Assertiveness is "the degree to which individuals are assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in their relationships with others" (House, Hanges, Javidan et al, 2004). In detail, 'Assertiveness' describes the extent to which people value and prefer in terms of tough aggressiveness (e.g. dominance, forcefulness) or non-aggressiveness (e.g. nurturance, social support) for finding societal solutions.

The results for 'In my society, the most effective way to change a political system is through public debates and free elections.' can demonstrate a difference between the cultural-religious

backgrounds. Especially, 'Jewish' with an average of 1.5, 'Latin America' with an average of 1.5 and 'Western Industrial' with an average of 1.9 agree to the statement that their political system can be changed through public debates and free elections. More concerns are issued from the respondents from 'South-East Asia' with an average of 2.6, 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic' with an average of 3.2 and last 'Slavic-Orthodox' with a slight disagree of an average of 3.5. In conclusion, the study population for 'Jewish', 'Latin America' and 'Western Industrial' see their societal environment as more open-minded regarding 'Assertiveness' due to democratic political system where the power comes from the people. In contrast, the cultural background of 'South-East Asia', 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic', and 'Slavic-Orthodox' are experiencing a more autocratic political system, where free elections and public debates are not partly unwanted or prohibited.

#### 7.4.7 Future orientation

Regarding the dimension of 'Future Orientation', the questionnaire contains one closed-end questions via Likert-rating from 1 (totally agree) to 5 (totally disagree):

- In my society, more people live for the present than live in the future.

Future Orientation is the degree to which we encourage and reward future-oriented behaviours such as planning and delaying gratification (House, Hanges, Javidan et al, 2004). In details, 'Future orientation' describes to which the cultures advocate long-term vs short-term planning for forthcoming events. It refers to the cultural status of people living for the present rather than for the future and vice versa.

The results for 'In my society, more people live for the present than live for the future' can demonstrate a difference between the cultural-religious backgrounds. Especially respondents from 'Slavic-Orthodox' with an average of 3.5 disagree slightly to this statement and therefore indicate that their societies have individuals who are more intrinsically motivated for achieving economic success in the future. Whereas 'South-East Asia' is presenting an average of 3.0 and therefore becomes neutrally regarding 'Future orientation'. In the same ranges are 'Western Industrial' with an average of 2.6 and 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic' with an average of 2.5.



In direct contrast, 'Latin America' with an average of 2.0 and 'Jewish' with an average of 2.0 overall agree that people in their society are living for the present rather than for the future.

In conclusion, the results indicate that the respondents with a 'Slavic-Orthodox' background have a higher propensity to save now for the future by working for long-term success and goals. On the other end, respondents with a 'Jewish' or 'Latin America' background are more characterized by living and spending now, rather than saving for the future.

#### 7.4.8 Performance orientation

Regarding the dimension of 'Performance orientation', the questionnaire contains one closed-end questions via Likert-rating from 1 (totally agree) to 5 (totally disagree):

- In my society, major rewards are based on only performance effectiveness.

Performance orientation is the degree to which innovation, high standards, and excellent performance are encouraged and rewarded (House, Hanges, Javidan et al, 2004).

In detail, 'Performance orientation' reflects the extent to which a community encourage and value training and development, value competitiveness and materialism.

The results for 'In my society, major rewards are based on only performance' can demonstrate a difference between the cultural-religious backgrounds. Especially, 'Latin America' with an average of 2.0 and 'Western Industrial' with an average of 2.1 confirm that in their society major rewards are based on performance effectiveness only, focusing on value competitiveness and materialism. Whereas 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic' with an average of 3.0, 'Slavic Orthodox' with an average of 3.0, and 'South-East Asia' with an average of 3.0 represents a middle position of neutrality. Last, 'Jewish' with an average of 2.8 slight agree that their society is giving major rewards are based on only performance effectiveness only. In conclusion, it seems that societies and nations in 'Latin America' and 'Western Industrial' are more performance-oriented than the other cultural-religious backgrounds and regions.

#### 7.4.9 Summary & Hypotheses

The collected data clearly symbolizes a significant difference for the manifestation of the cultural dimensions throughout the various cultural-religious backgrounds and geographies. In all cultural dimensions (named Uncertainty avoidance, Power distance, In-group collectivism, Human orientation, Institutional collectivism, Assertiveness, Future orientation, and Performance orientation), statistical analyses demonstrate a significant difference between the various cultural groups (see figure 11). Regarding 'Uncertainty avoidance', significant differences of  $< .005$  could be analysed for 'Western Industrial' against the other backgrounds, except 'Jewish'. The group of 'Slavic-Orthodox', 'South-East Asia', and 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic' don't show a significant difference among themselves. Regarding 'Power distance', the analysis demonstrates two groups of cultural backgrounds, which can demonstrate a significant difference of  $< .005$  among themselves. In detail, the group of 'Slavic Orthodox', 'Western Industrial' and 'South East Asia' shows a significant difference to the group of 'Latin America', 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic', and 'Jewish'. Regarding 'In-group collectivism', the cultural groups are showing a more homogenous distribution among themselves, where 'Jewish' is demonstrating a highly significant difference of  $< .005$  to the other cultural backgrounds. Whereas, 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic' is demonstrating a significant difference of  $< .005$  only to 'South-East Asia' and 'Jewish'. Regarding 'Human Orientation', the analysis demonstrates two groups of cultural backgrounds, which can demonstrate a significant difference of  $< .005$  among themselves. In detail, the group of 'Jewish', 'Western Industrial' and 'South East Asia' shows a significant difference to the group of 'Latin America', 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic', and 'Slavic Orthodox'. Regarding 'Institutional collectivism', the analysis demonstrates three groups of cultural backgrounds, which can demonstrate a significant difference of  $< .005$  among themselves. In detail, the group of 'Jewish', the group of 'Western Industrial', South East-Asia', 'Slavic Orthodox' and 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic', and the group of 'Latin America' are demonstrating a significant difference among themselves. Regarding 'Assertiveness', the analysis demonstrates three groups of cultural backgrounds, which can demonstrate a significant difference of  $< .005$  among themselves. In detail, the group of 'South-East Asia, the

group of 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic', 'Slavic Orthodox', and the group of 'Western Industrial', 'Jewish', and 'Latin America' are demonstrating a significant difference among themselves. Regarding 'Future orientation', the cultural groups are showing a more homogenous distribution among themselves, where 'Jewish', 'Slavic Orthodox' and 'Latin America' is demonstrating a highly significant difference of  $<.005$  to the other cultural backgrounds. Whereas, 'South-East Asia', 'Western Industrial', and 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic' are showing lower significance. Regarding 'Performance orientation', the analysis demonstrates two groups of cultural background, which can demonstrate a significant difference of  $< .005$  among themselves. In detail, the group of 'Jewish', 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic', 'Slavic Orthodox', and 'South-East Asia' and the group of 'Western Industrial' and 'Western Industrial' shows a significant difference among themselves. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 'The investigated geographical regions including their cultural-religious backgrounds differ from each other due to their varying manifestation of cultural dimensions' and Hypothesis 4 'A dominate cultural dimension in terms of greatest variations between the various backgrounds is not existent as all cultural dimensions are nearly equally effected.' have to be accepted.

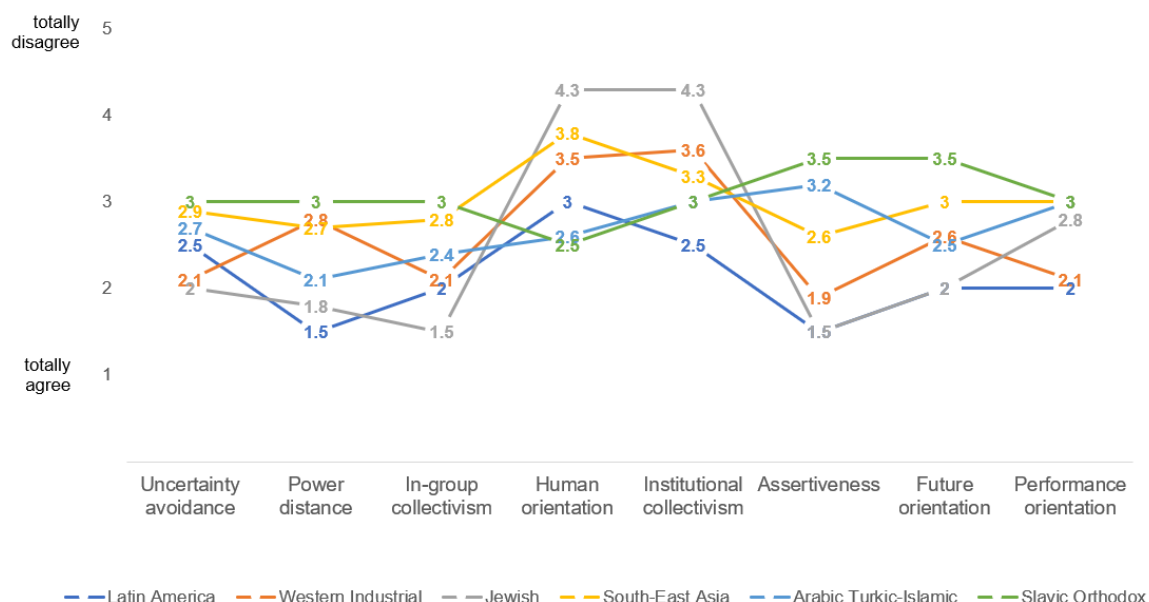


Figure 11: Comparison of societal parameters regarding cultural backgrounds

## 7.5 Organisation and corporate management

In the sections before, the demographics of the respondents as well as the different cultural-regional regions have been described and analysed in order to create a comprehensive overview of the survey population. Therefore, this section is focusing on the respective organisations analysing their company profiles and corporate culture. The company profile yield information about the respective type of business, business sector and the number of employees. Furthermore, the company profile gains information about the spoken languages and business network of the organisation, which finally provide insights on how the organisations are positioned regarding national and international business management. Therefore, six questions have been formulated for this section (see table 8).

Moreover, the corporate culture can be described as the beliefs and behaviours which impact performance, adaptability, willingness, and responsibility of employees to interact and handle external business processes (Denison, 1990). Similar to the section before 'Society and Culture', the investigation of the respective corporate culture is following the research concept of dimensionalizing of cultures by Geert Hofstede (Hofstede, 2011) and by the GLOBE study (House, Hanges, Javidan et al, 2004), which focuses on 'Power Distance', 'Performance Orientation', 'Uncertainty Avoidance', 'Future Orientation', 'Institutional Collectivism', and 'In-Group Collectivism'. Therefore, six questions have been formulated for this section of the questionnaire (see table 8). Overall, the gained information and data are necessary to understand the institutionalization and implementation of cross-cultural management of key accounts and the impact of intraorganizational determinants.

	Categories	Questions
<b>Company profile</b>	Location	Where is your company based?
	Type of business	My company is mainly (A) producing/manufacturing goods, (B) offering/providing services, (C) distributing/reselling goods.
	Business sector	What are the top business sectors of your company?
	Business network	Where is your company geographically working?
	Spoken languages	Which languages (spoken and written) are common in your company for the communication with employees, customers, clients and business partners?
	Employees	How many people are working for your company?
<b>Company culture</b>	Institutional collectivism	Does your company have restrictions to contact, communicate, and work with other cultural regions?
	Future orientation	In my organization, meetings are usually planned well in advance vs spontaneous.
	Performance orientation	In my organization, employees are encouraged to strive for continuously improved performance
	Power distance	In my organization, a person's influence is based primarily on one's ability and contribution to the organization vs the authority of one's position.
	Uncertainty Avoidance	In my organization, job requirements and instructions are spelt out in-detail, so employees know what they are expected to do.
	In group collectivism	In my organization, teamwork is more valued than individualism vs individualism is more valued than group cohesion

Table 8: Overview of questions regarding company profile and corporate culture

### 7.5.1 Company profile

#### Company location

The company location is defined as the respective country where the company is located or headquartered. These insights provide a better understanding of the different cultural-religious backgrounds in terms of regional geographical mapping (see Appendix 6).

#### Type of business

In this questionnaire, three major types of businesses, such as manufacturing, merchandising and reselling, have been used to categorize the respective types of business of the respondents. Manufacturing can be defined as a business which buys products, mainly raw materials, to use them in making new goods. Finally, the manufactured products will then be sold to customers and consumers. In comparison, the service and merchandising business are offering services and/or products to their customers. For the service business, companies

can offer expertise, advice or similar products, which can be seen at accounting firms, consultancy agents, law firms and others. In contrast, the merchandising business is buying products from the manufacturer or similar at buying price and sell it at retail price. Finally, the reseller or distributor business is focused on buying noncompeting product lines and reselling them to other sub-dealers or retailers or direct to the end-users or customers. Resellers or distributors are mainly used by manufacturers and producers for regional product distribution and customer service, where the manufacturer or producer don't have their own sales forces or faces more challenging market access and development.

The results show that the majority of 65.3% of all companies are working in the business of distributing and reselling goods. Furthermore, around 20.8% of the companies are producing and manufacturing goods. Finally, around 13.9% of the companies are focusing on offering and providing goods and services. In detail, around 25% of the companies with product distribution business are coming from the 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic' regions. Good producers and manufacturers are mainly equally coming from 'Western Industrial', 'South-East Asia', and 'Latin America'. Enterprises with service and merchandising businesses are based in 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic', 'South-East Asia' and 'Slavic-Orthodox' regions.

### **Business sector**

The business sector provides information about the industry segments in which the respective organisation is making business, focusing on private and public sectors. In comparison, private sector organisations are owned by individuals and driven by profit, which benefits the respective owners, shareholders and investors. In contrast, public sector organisations are owned by the government and provide goods and services for the benefit of the community. Around 88% of the enterprises in this research study are working in the sector of supplying hospitals and governmental organisations with goods and services. In addition, around 32% of the companies are also involved in the private sector for pharmaceutical production and cosmetics. Furthermore, 11% of the companies are also working in Information Technology and Construction Services, respectively. Food and Consulting businesses will be represented with 8% and 3%, respectively.

### **Business network**

Regarding the business network, around 47.2% of all companies are working national, operating in one country only, such as most of the companies in regions of 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic', 'Latin America', and 'South-East Asia'. In contrast, 20.8% of the enterprises are working globally, operating in more than two continents. Especially, companies from 'Western Industrial' regions focusing mainly on global businesses. International businesses (operating between two continents) with 12.5%, locally businesses (operating in a specific geographic area of a country) with 9.7% and regional businesses (operating in more than one country) with 9.7% are the minority in the geographical coverage of the business direction.

### **Spoken languages**

The number of spoken languages is a good indicator for the willingness of an organisation or nationality to speak and adapt to another foreign language. All participants indicated that they could speak 'English'. The largest diversity of language has been observed for 'Western Industrial', and 'South-East Asia'. In contrast, 'Slavic-Orthodox', 'Latin America', and 'Jewish' represent the lowest diversity of spoken languages in their respective enterprises.

### **Number of employees**

The number of employees is a good indicator for the size of the respective company as a lower number of employees could indicate a smaller enterprise with local representatives. In contrast, companies with a wider regional network could be characterized by a higher number of employees.

The results indicate that 38.9% of all enterprises in this study have more than 300 employees, mainly located in 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic', 'South-East Asia' and 'Western Industrial' regions. Around 15.3% of all companies are characterized by a range of 101-200 employees, followed by 201-300 employees with 12.5%. Overall, these results indicate that 66.7% of all companies in this study are larger enterprises with wider regional network and range. Around 11.1% of

the companies in this study have 11-20 employees, mainly based in Israel and Latin America regions. Only 2.78% of companies employ 1-10 employees.

### 7.5.2 Company culture

Regarding the company culture, this study is conducted in total six questions to cover aspects of 'institutional collectivism', 'future orientation', 'performance orientation', 'power distance', 'uncertainty avoidance', and 'in-group collectivism'.

#### **Institutional collectivism**

Regarding the dimension of 'institutional collectivism', the questionnaire contains one multiple-choice question:

- Does your company have restrictions to contact, communicate, and work with other cultural regions?

Regarding the company culture, 'institutional collectivism' can be considered as the degree to which organizational and environmental practices influence the decision-making process within the company.

Overall, 77.8% of respondents don't experience any restrictions or limitation to work and communicate with other cultural regions. Around 13.9% of respondents declared that they have governmental restrictions, like sanctions and embargo, to work and communication with other cultural regions. In contrast, around 4.2% of the respondents have personal concerns and corporate restriction to work and communicate with other cultural regions. In detail, 5.5% and 1.39% respondents from 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic' and 'Jewish' regions experience personal and corporate restrictions and limitations regarding other cultural-religious regions.

#### **Future orientation**

Regarding the dimension of 'future orientation', the questionnaire contains one closed-end question via Likert-rating from 1 (totally agree) to 5 (totally disagree):

- In my organization, meetings are usually planned well in advance vs spontaneous.



Regarding the company culture, 'future orientation' describes is corporate perspective and direction for their employees working for the present rather than for the future and vice versa. Therefore, 'future orientation' focuses on the aspects to which the company cultures advocate long-term vs short-term planning for forthcoming events.

Overall, around 27.8% of all respondents strongly agree that meetings in their organisations are usually planned well in advance. Only 12.5% of all respondents slightly disagreed with this closed-end question, whereas no one of study population totally disagreed. The majority of respondents with 33.3% slightly agreed, whereas 26.4% gave a neutral response.

Regarding the cultural-religious background, the respondents from 'Slavic-Orthodox' with an average 3, 'Latin America' with an average of 2.5 and 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic' with an average 2.4 tend to express that their meetings are less planned well in advance and happen more spontaneous in their organisations. In contrast, respondents from 'Jewish' with an average 2, 'South-East Asia' with an average 1.9, and 'Western Industrial' with an average of 2.2 confirm that meetings are usually better planned in advanced and happen less spontaneously.

### **Performance orientation**

Regarding the dimension of 'performance orientation', the questionnaire contains one closed-end questions via Likert-rating from 1 (totally agree) to 5 (totally disagree):

- 'In my organization, employees are encouraged to strive for continuously improved performance

Regarding company culture, 'performance orientation' reflects the extent to which a company is encouraged for innovation, high standards and excellent performance, mainly focusing value training and development, value competitiveness and materialism.

Overall, 38.9% of all respondents strongly agree that their organizations encourage employees to strive for continuously improved performance, followed by 33.3%, who slightly agreed to this question. Only 5.6% of the study population slightly disagreed, followed by 1.4% who totally disagreed that their companies support continuously improved performance. Only 20.8% of the respondents gave a neutral response.

Regarding the cultural-religious background, the respondents from 'Western Industrial' with a mean of 1.4 and 'South-East Asia' with an average of 1.6 strongly agree that their organizations encourage employees to strive for continuously improved performance. Whereas the responses from 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic' with a mean of 2.1 and 'Jewish' with an average of 2.0 slightly agree to this statement of performance orientation. In contrast, respondents from 'Latin America' with an average of 3.0 and from 'Slavic-East Asia' with a mean of 4.0 evaluate their company culture to be less encouraging for continuous performance improvements.

### **Power distance**

Regarding the dimension of 'power distance', the questionnaire contains one closed-end question via Likert-rating from 1 (totally agree) to 5 (totally disagree):

- In my organization, a person's influence is based primarily on one's ability and contribution to the organization vs the authority of one's position

Regarding company culture, 'power distance' indicates the distribution of power and wealth between individuals in the respective company. Therefore, the 'power distance' provides insights into the extent to which employees will follow the whims of an authoritative figure.

The majority of the respondents with 27.8% have a neutral opinion on this statement and might believe that the one's ability and contribution to the organization vs the authority of one's position should be equal. Only 4.2% of the responses tend to strongly disagree. Whereas 25% of the respondents strongly agree that the person's influence is based on one's ability and contribution to the organization.

Regarding the cultural-religious background, participants from 'Latin America' responded with an average of 3.5 and therefore slightly support the statement a person's influence is based primarily on the authority of one's position. Respondents from 'Slavic-Orthodox' unit a neutral opinion by an average of 3.0. In contrast, responses from 'Western Industrial' with an average of 2.4, 'South-East Asia' with an average of 2.7, 'Jewish' with an average of 2.0, and 'Arabic-Turkic-Islamic' with an average of 2.4 slightly agree that the person's influence is based primarily on one's ability and contribution to the organization.

## **Uncertainty avoidance**

Regarding the dimension of 'uncertainty avoidance', the questionnaire contains one closed-end questions via Likert-rating from 1 (totally agree) to 5 (totally disagree):

- In my organization, job requirements and instructions are spelt out in detail, so employees know what they are expected to do.

Regarding company culture, 'uncertainty avoidance' is dealing with a company's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity and refers therefore to the company's level of tolerance or comfort for ambiguity, uncertainty, and unstructured situations. It is "the extent to which a society, organization, or group relies on social norms, rules, and procedures to alleviate the unpredictability of future events" (House, Hanges, Javidan et al, 2004).

Around 30.6% of the participants responded with a neutral statement, where they either agree or disagree that job requirements and instructions are spelt out in detail, so employees know what they are expected to do. In contrast, the majority of the participants slightly agreed with 23.6% or strongly agreed with 29.2%. Only 11.1% and 5.6% slightly and strongly disagreed that job requirements and instructions are spelt out in details in their organisations, respectively.

Regarding the cultural-religious background, participants from 'Western Industrial' with an average of 2.3, 'South-East Asia' with an average of 2.6, 'Jewish' with an average of 2.3, and 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic' with an average of 2.1 slightly agree that job requirements and instructions are spelt out in detail, so employees know what they are expected to do. Whereas participants from 'Latin America' with an average of 3.0, and 'South-East Asia' with an average of 3.0 either disagree or agree.

## **In-group collectivism**

Regarding the dimension of 'in-group collectivism', the questionnaire contains one closed-end questions via Likert-rating from 1 (totally agree) to 5 (totally disagree):

- In my organization, teamwork is more valued than individualism vs individualism is more valued than group cohesion.

Regarding company culture, 'in-group collectivism' can be described as the degree to which employees' express pride, loyalty and cohesiveness in their organizations. Therefore, 'in-group collectivism' is focusing on the level of independence and autonomy of individuals and people's identity regards the group members within the company.

The majority of respondents with 45.8% strongly agree that teamwork is more valued than individualism. In contrast, only 1.4% strongly disagree, and 16.7% slightly disagree, and therefore experience in their companies that individualism is more valued than group cohesion. Around 20.8% of responses are neutral.

Regarding the cultural-religious background, respondents from 'Latin America' with an average 3.5, and from 'Slavic Orthodox' with an average of 4.0 slightly disagree and experience in their organizations a higher value for individualism rather for group cohesion. Responses from 'Western Industrial' with an average of 1.9, 'South-East Asia' with an average of 1.9, and 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic' with an average of 1.7 confirm that teamwork in their organisations is more valued compared to individualism.

### 6.5.3 Summary & Hypothesis

Analysed data from the study elucidate that key account management is omnipresent at all enterprise sizes, except for small-sized enterprises between 1 to 10 employees. Larger organisations with more than 300 employees demonstrate a significant higher implementation rate of key account management compared to smaller organisations. But also, medium-sized enterprises between 11-20 employees are characterized by the management of key accounts. Regarding the industry segment, the analysed data elucidate, that key account management is mainly present with 45.3% in the healthcare business sector, including supplying hospitals with products and goods. Around 35.8% of key account management could be observed in the telecommunication sector, followed by pharmaceuticals, food and cosmetics supply and distribution. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 'Key account management is mainly implemented and executed in larger international enterprises with market access in health care and pharmaceutical business' has to be accepted.

Furthermore, companies with a strive for performance, a mindset of teamwork/group cohesion and a clear allocation of task and responsibilities meet the corporate requirements to manage key accounts. The analysed data from the study demonstrate that the strive for performance in a sales organisation is important in key account management. The majority of over 54% of key account professionals evaluated the 'strive for performance' as part of the company culture will have a positive impact on the execution of key account management. In comparison, key account professionals assign 'teamwork and group cohesion' a minor role in the execution of key account management. Only 41% have a positive opinion on the group cohesion factor. A similar picture can be seen for 'clear task allocation', and 'future-orientation' as only 41% of the key account professionals confirmed a minor role on key account management. Therefore, Hypothesis 6 'Only companies with a strive for performance, a mindset of teamwork/group cohesion and a clear allocation of task and responsibilities meet the corporate requirements to manage key account.' has to be accepted.

## 7.6 Cross-cultural management of key accounts

In general, this section is focusing on the organisational aspects of the management of key accounts according to cross-cultural perception and competences. The first part of this section is to investigate the corporate constitution of the respective key account management programs and how is it implemented and executed within the organisational culture and environment. The second part of this section is focusing on the corporate perception of cross-cultural diversities in their key account sales programs. Among the corporate direction, the third part of this section is investigating the individual perception of cross-cultural management regarding cross-cultural diversity between the respective companies and the associated key accounts (see table 9). Overall, this gained information and data are necessary to understand the institutionalization and implementation of cross-cultural management of key accounts and the impact of intraorganizational determinants. Furthermore, these organisational insights

provide also directions regarding cross-cultural sensitivity and communication, uncertainty and ambiguity management, and leadership across geographies.

Categories	Questions
Management of key accounts	In my company, key accounts management (KAM) is Implemented (KAM acts as a task or process) vs Institutionalized (KAM is fully integrated into the organisation through-out all departments).
	Does your company have high-potential accounts with complex needs requiring long-term and established relationships?
	Does your company may treat/ view a customer as a key account but doesn't have formally define them as such?
	Key accounts will be managed (A) directly through a dedicated key account-specific sales team, (B) directly through a dedicated key account manager, and (C) through the general salesforce (inside sales, national sales, account sales)
	Departments in my company are fully aware and adequate prepared for the specific needs and requirements of key accounts.
Corporate perception of cross-cultural management	My company is putting efforts in the awareness and knowledge of cultural differences to their key customers, clients, and business partners.
	My company is considering cultural differences to their key customers, clients, and business partners as an important factor for success.
	My company is providing principles, guidelines and set of values to work cross-culturally.
	My company includes cross-cultural characteristics into the account profiles, like language preferences, religious holidays, specific norms of behavioural codes, etc.
	My company is facing difficulties in establishing KAM relationship due to cross-cultural differences.
	My company is considering cross-cultural skills for the hiring of sales forces.
	My company is providing opportunities for key account management training, e.g. time management, customer relationship, business strategy etc.
	My company is providing opportunities for culture-specific training, e.g. language learning, cultural insights, working abroad etc.
Individual perception of cross-cultural management	An improvement of the perception and consideration of cross-cultural diversity between my company and key accounts would improve:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revenue performance</li> <li>• Customer trust and confidence</li> <li>• Communication channels</li> <li>• Innovation process</li> <li>• Problem-solving</li> <li>• Project coordination &amp; collaboration</li> <li>• Information sharing</li> <li>• Market insights</li> <li>• Sales circle</li> <li>• Product life circle</li> </ul>

Table 9: Questions regarding cross-cultural management of key accounts

### 7.6.1 Management of key accounts

This sub-section is investigating the respective corporate management of key accounts regarding the awareness, implementation and institutionalization of appropriate key account sales programs. Therefore, five questions have been formulated regarding corporate key account differentiation and planning.

#### **Account differentiation**

Account differentiation can be defined as a process to divide sales organisations into different classifications. This segmentation process underlies commercial criteria in order to allocate accounts to the sales team and respective account sales representatives. Therefore, account differentiation is a commercial tool to define and execute appropriate plans and actions according to the account-specific needs and opportunities. Regarding key account management, account differentiation is one of the crucial elements in commercial operation in order to allocate the right corporate resources and support for the management of key sales organisations.

Regarding the category of 'account differentiation', the questionnaire contains one closed-end questions with Likert-ratings from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree):

- Does your company have high-potential accounts with complex needs requiring long-term and established relationships?

The results demonstrate that 56.9% of the respondents strongly agree that their companies have high-potential accounts with complex needs requiring long-term and established relationships. Only 1.4% of the study participants strongly disagreed with this key account-related statement. The rest of the respondents agreed or have a neutral opinion, with 25% and 16.7%, respectively.

Regarding the cultural regions, it seems that sales organisations from 'Latin America' regions with an average of 2.5 and 'Slavic-Orthodox' regions with an average of 3.0 have a lower number of high-potential accounts with complex needs requiring long-term and established relationships. Especially sales organisations from 'Western Industrial' with an average of 1.3

and 'South-East Asia' with an average of 1.4 strongly agree that they have high-potential accounts with complex needs requiring long-term and established relationships.

### **Corporate key account management program**

A key account management program can be defined as the strategic direction of an organisation to manage high-value accounts or customers, named key accounts. This strategic direction is based on cross-departmental efforts and initiatives in order to orchestrate and connect all key account-specific operations within an organisation. Therefore, the corporate key account plan can be observed from the customer's perspective as well as from the corporate point of view. Regarding the category of 'corporate key account management program', the questionnaire contains five questions:

1. Does your company may treat/view a customer as a key account but doesn't have formally define them as such?

The results demonstrate a mixed picture, where 30.6% of the participants agree that their companies may treat/ view a customer as a key account but doesn't have formally define them as such. Also, 30.6% of the respondents show a neutral opinion regarding this statement. In contrast, 12.5% of the participants confirm that key account management is formalized in throughout their companies. Only 9.7% of study population strongly disagree. Regarding the cultural regions, it seems that sales organisations from 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic' regions with an average of 3.2 and 'Jewish' regions with an average of 3.8 symbolize that they have more a formularized way of treating a customer as a key account compared to the other cultural regions with an average between 2.4 and 2.7.

2. 'Key accounts will be managed (A) directly through a dedicated key account-specific sales team, (B) directly through a dedicated key account manager, and (C) through the general salesforce (inside sales, national sales, account sales)'.

The majority with 45.8% of the respondents confirms the key accounts will be managed by dedicated key account managers, whereas 31.9% of the respondents declare that key accounts will be managed through the general sales force. Only 20.8% demonstrate that



key accounts will be handled by dedicated key account-specific sales teams. Around 1.5% of respondents see the involvement of top-level management in key account management. Regarding the cultural background, key accounts in 'Latin America' will be managed by 100% through a general salesforce instead of a dedicated key account team. Furthermore, data also shows that the management of key accounts in 'Jewish' and 'Slavic-Orthodox' regions will be managed either by dedicated key account managers or through a general sales team. In 'Western Industrial', 'South-East Asia', and 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic' regions key account will be managed up to 90% through dedicated key account managers and less through a general sales force.

3. 'Departments in my company are fully aware and adequate prepared for the specific needs and requirements of key accounts.'

The results clearly indicate a classification of departments, where the respondents observe different perceptions of awareness and preparation for the specific needs and requirements of key accounts. Only 48.6% of respondents confirm that Human Resources are fully aligned regarding the key account management, followed by IT and Finance with each 50%, Research & Development with 52.7%, and Production/Manufacturing with 52.8%. More integrated into the key account management plans are Logistics with 62.5%, and Supply Chain with 66.7%. Furthermore, study participants clearly indicate that departments with direct key account contacts are better prepared for the needs and requirements for key accounts. Therefore, around 69.4% of respondents see Marketing fully aligned to key account management, followed by Commercial Operations with 76.4%, and Top Management with 77.7%. Finally, around 86.1% of all respondents observed that Customer Service are fully aware and adequate prepared for the specific needs and requirements of key accounts. Regarding the cultural regions, a significant difference between the various backgrounds wasn't measurable.

4. In my company, key accounts management is Implemented (key account management acts a task or process) vs Institutionalized (key account management is fully integrated into the organisation through-out all departments)

Around 44.5% of the respondents confirm that key account management is implemented in their sales organisation in terms of formularized tasks and processes. In contrast, 34.7% of the study participants see their key account management approach institutionalized within the company. Only 20.8% of respondents have a neutral opinion on this statement. Regarding the cultural regions, a significant difference between the various backgrounds wasn't measurable.

#### 7.6.2 Corporate management of cross-cultural diversity

The corporate management of cross-cultural diversity can be defined as the organisational awareness, consideration and conversion for cross-cultural interactions between at least two different cultural-religious regions and geographies. In this circumstance, the corporate management can be considered as a company journey starting from the identification of cross-cultural challenges, followed by the intention to make a corporate change and finally to make a decision to implement and probably to institutionalize this change throughout the entire company culture across all levels.

##### **Corporate awareness**

The 'corporate awareness' is the first stage of the journey, when an organisation first identifies challenges and/or opportunities regarding cross-cultural factors and differentiators between them and other sales organisations. This stage is clearly characterised by providing awareness and knowledge regarding cross-cultural differences so that corporate issues and challenges can be identified. Regarding the category of 'corporate awareness', the questionnaire contains two closed-end questions via Likert-rating from 1 (totally agree) to 5 (totally disagree):

1. My company is putting efforts in the awareness and knowledge of cultural differences to their key customers, clients, and business partners.

Around 63.9% of the respondents confirm that their companies are putting efforts in the awareness and knowledge of cultural differences to their key customers, clients, and business partners. Whereas 15.3% of study participants disagree/strongly disagree with

this statement. Regarding the cultural regions, study participants confirm with an average of 2.3 that in 'Western Industrial' geographies, companies putting more efforts in the awareness and knowledge of cultural challenges, followed by 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic' and 'Latin America' with an average of each 2.5 and 'South East Asia' with an average of 2.8. In contrast, responses from 'Jewish' with an average of 3.3 and 'Slavic-Orthodox' regions with an average of 3.0 intend to have a neutral opinion.

2. My company is facing difficulties in establishing key account management relationship due to cross-cultural differences.

Around 30.5% of respondents clearly agree/strongly agree that their companies are facing problems in key account management relationships due to cross-cultural differences. In contrast, around 36.1% of the participants strongly disagree that their companies are experiencing cross-cultural challenges in key account management. Circa 33.3% of participant expressed a neutral opinion on this statement. Regarding the cultural regions, responses from 'Western Industrial' with an average of 2.8 and 'South-East Asia' with an average of 2.8 confirm that difficulties exist in establishing key account management relationship due to cross-cultural differences. The other cultural regions demonstrate a neutral opinion regarding this question of each 3.0.

### **Corporate consideration**

The 'corporate consideration' is the second stage of the journey, where an organisation get familiar with the problems and challenges for cross-cultural management. At this stage, the company evaluates the problem, its urgency, how it can be solved, and whether it really needs to be solved. Regarding the category of 'corporate consideration', the questionnaire contains two questions:

1. My company is considering cultural differences to their key customers, clients, and business partners as an important factor for success.

Around 59.8% of the respondents confirmed that their companies are considering cultural differences to their key customers, clients, and business partners as an important factor

for success. Only 15.3% of the participants disagree and cannot identify any evidence that cross-cultural difference as considered as corporate success factors. Around 25% of the study population demonstrated a neutral opinion. Regarding the cultural regions, participants from 'Slavic-Orthodox' with an average of 2.0 and 'Western Industrial' with an average of 2.23 confirm that the cultural differences to their key customers, clients, and business partners might play an important role for success. Responses from the remaining cultural backgrounds demonstrate a neutral mindset regarding this question.

2. My company is considering cross-cultural skills for the hiring of sales forces.

Around 43.1% of the respondents indicate their companies considering cross-cultural skills for the hiring of sales forces. Whereas, 25.2% of participants disagree and cannot identify cross-cultural hiring aspects of their sales force. Around 31.9% of the study population demonstrated a neutral opinion. Regarding the cultural background, responses from all geographies demonstrate that cross-cultural skills play a minor role for the hiring of sales professionals as the average of the Likert rating is between 2.7 for 'Western Industrial' and 3.4 for 'South-East Asia'.

### **Corporate conversion**

The 'corporate conversion' is the last stage of the journey and can also be considered as the 'decision-making stage', where companies execute their corporate plans to solve current and prospective challenges for cross-cultural account management. At this point, actions will be created throughout all corporate levels in order to stem the problem of cross-cultural diversity of key account sales. Regarding the category of 'corporate conversion', the questionnaire contains four questions:

1. My company is providing principles, guidelines and set of values to work cross-culturally.

Around 55.5% of the respondents confirm that their companies are providing principles, guidelines and set of values to work cross-culturally. A neutral opinion was given by 25% of the study population. Only 19.5% of the participants disagree with this statement. Regarding the cultural background, the majority of responses in the range of 2.5 and 3.0

demonstrate a neutral mindset regarding their companies for providing principles, guidelines and set of values to work cross-culturally. Only participants with a 'Slavic-Orthodox' background slightly disagree with this statement.

2. My company is providing opportunities for key account management training, e.g. time management, customer relationship, business strategy etc.

Around 62.5% of the respondents confirm that their companies are providing opportunities for key account management training, e.g. time management, customer relationship, business strategy etc. A neutral opinion was given by 18.1% of the study population. Only 19.7% of the participants disagree with this statement.

Regarding the cultural background, mainly responses from 'Western Industrial' with an average of 2.4, 'Slavic-Orthodox' with an average of 2.0 and 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic' with an average of 2.4 confirm that their sales organisations are providing principles, guidelines and set of values to work cross-culturally. In contrast, participants with a 'Jewish', 'Latin America', and 'South-East Asia' background demonstrate a neutral mindset regarding this question.

3. My company is providing opportunities for culture-specific training, e.g. language learning, cultural insights, working abroad etc.

Around 30.6% of respondents confirm that their companies are providing opportunities for culture-specific training, e.g. language learning, cultural insights, working abroad etc. Similar ratio of 29.2% of the participants disagree with this statement. A neutral opinion was given by 40.2% of the study population. Regarding the cultural background, responses from all geographies demonstrate a neutral mindset (range between of 2.5 and 3.3) regarding their companies in providing opportunities for culture-specific training, e.g. language learning, cultural insights, working abroad etc.

4. My company includes cross-cultural characteristics into the account profiles, like language preferences, religious holidays, specific norms of behavioural codes, etc.

Around 52.8% of the respondents confirm that their companies include cross-cultural characteristics into the account profiles, like language preferences, religious holidays,

specific norms of behavioural codes, etc. A neutral opinion was given by 30.6% of the study population. Only 16.6% of the participants disagree with this statement. Regarding the cultural background, responses from all geographies demonstrate a neutral mindset (range between 2.5 and 3.0) regarding their companies for considering cross-cultural characteristics into the account profiles.

### 7.6.3 Individual management of cross-cultural diversity

The perception and consideration of cross-cultural diversity between a company and their key accounts can also be observed from the individual perspective, i.e. from the sales representatives. This individual view of cross-cultural diversity can also be considered as an influential corporate factor for the implementation and institutionalization of cross-cultural key account management programs.

The results clearly indicate that aspects of the cross-cultural diversity of key accounts will be considered in the planning and execution of corporate functions. Only 32% of respondents believe that Logistics is fully aligned regarding the implementation of cross-cultural key account management programs, followed by IT with 33.3%, Research & Development with 33.3% and Finance with 36.1%. More institutionalized in the key account management plans are Supply Chain with 40.3%, Production & Manufacturing with 45.8%, Human Resources with 48.6%, and Business Intelligence with 48.6%. Furthermore, study participants clearly indicate that departments with direct key account contacts are better prepared for the needs and requirements for key accounts. Therefore, around 61.1% of respondents see Top Management more aligned to key account management, followed by Customer Service with 66.6%, and Marketing with 68.1%. Finally, around 69.5% of all respondents believe that cross-cultural diversity is best integrated into Commercial Operation as an influential corporate factor for cross-cultural key account management programs. Statistical analytics demonstrate a statistical significance between the different cultural-religious groups regarding the consideration of cross-cultural diversity of key accounts in the planning and execution of

corporate functions. Only for the departments for Commercial Operation and Top Management didn't show any statistical significance between the different cultural-religious groups.

#### 7.6.4 Summary & Hypotheses

The analysed data show clearly that around 45% of the sales organisations with a key account focus confirm that the key account management approach is implemented into the corporate structure in forms of formularized task and processes. A similar picture could be found on who is managing key accounts within the sales organisation as data shows that key accounts will be managed by only 45% by dedicated key account managers. Furthermore, corporate due diligence about key account management varies between different departments. Corporate functions with a close distance to commercial operation seem to be more aware of the specific needs and requirements of key accounts, such as customer service, marketing and top management. In contrast, company departments with a larger distance to commercial operations seem to be less aware of the specific requirements for managing key accounts, such as human resources, finance and IT. Furthermore, the probability of the implementation of key account management, in the form of task and processes is significantly higher for enterprise with more than 50 employees compared to smaller companies. Furthermore, larger companies above 100 employees demonstrate a higher probability of the implementation of key account managers for their key accounts instead of a general sales team. Therefore, hypothesis 7 'The management of key accounts is a fully integrated corporate direction throughout all department to serve adequately high-value customers, clients and business partners.' can be accepted.

Furthermore, the analysed data from the survey demonstrate clearly, that over 53.2% of the enterprises with key account management consider cross-cultural differences as an important business success and therefore putting additional efforts in the awareness and knowledge of cultural differences to their key customers, clients, and business partners. Therefore, hypothesis 8 'Enterprises with integrated KAM programs consider cross-cultural differences in their customer relationship management, and sales force development and training ' can be

accepted. A third of the companies with key account management are facing difficulties in establishing key account relationships due to cross-cultural obstacles. Therefore, over 50% of the companies with a key account management approach provide guidelines or a set of values to work cross-culturally. Nevertheless, only 20% of the enterprises offering specific cross-cultural training for key account managers or even consider cross-cultural skills for the hiring process for key account managers. Therefore, hypothesis 9 'The corporate consideration of cross-cultural diversity would significantly improve the performance and capabilities of the respective company.' can be accepted.

## 7.7 Cross-cultural skills for key account managers

This section is aimed to analyse the responses from the questionnaire, focusing on preferred cross-cultural qualifications for key account managers. Therefore, this sub-section of questions has been categorized, covering aspects of 'Emotional skills', 'Intellectual skills', 'Experiential skills', and 'Physical presence' (Sizoo, Serrie and Shapero, 2007). 'Emotional skills' can be described as emotional intelligence for "making good decisions, take optimal action to solve problems, cope with change and succeed" rather than the conventional view of showing and sharing of emotions, like feelings, enthusiasms or fears and doubts (Mayer and Salovey, 2001). In contrast, 'Intellectual skills' can be understood as the abilities from individuals regarding the evaluation, organisation, and application of knowledge and understanding, e.g. critical thinking, formal operations, problem solving and creativity (Donald, 1985). Furthermore, 'Experiential skills' can be described as the ability of learning and educating through reflection on 'doing' in terms of hands-on experiences rather than on received teaching or training (Silberman, 2010). In contrast, the category 'Physical presence' refers to the degree of physical fitness and stamina levels. In conclusion, this section is investigating the aspects of preferred and required job qualifications and skillsets for key account managers according to their cross-cultural scopes and tasks. Furthermore, the analysis is also focusing on how different cultural-religious backgrounds evaluate and appraise job qualifications for key account managers. Therefore,



15 questions have been designed and implemented in order to investigate the cross-cultural job qualifications and skills required for key account managers (see table 10).

Categories	Questions/Statements
<i>Please rank these job qualifications for key account managers:</i>	
Emotional skills	Open-mindedly to different ideas and values.
	Comfortable working with people from different cultures
	Ability to cope with constant change
	Ability to relate to and interact with people of different personalities and backgrounds
	Sensitive to economic considerations and human needs
Intellectual skills	Developing an awareness of other cultures
	Being aware of the dangers of stereotyping
	Broad background and knowledge of world affairs and cultures
	Ability to notice details that Others might normally miss
	Diplomatic skills and sensitivity to different management styles
	Good listening, clarifying, questioning and responding skills
Experiential skills	Significant experience in and enjoyment of intensive cross-cultural environments
	Sensitivity and awareness of how one's actions may affect others
	Adept in new environments and at understanding the motivations of others
Physical presence	High degree of physical stamina; excellent and robust health

Table 10: Overview of questions regarding their job qualities for key account managers

### 7.7.1 Emotional skills

Regarding the category of 'Emotional skills', the questionnaire contains five closed-end questions with Likert-ratings from 1 (very important) to 5 (unimportant):

- Open-mindedly to different ideas and values.
- Comfortable working with people from different cultures
- Ability to cope with constant change

- Ability to relate to and interact with people of different personalities and backgrounds
- Sensitive to economic considerations and human needs

The overall results demonstrate a broad consent and approval with an average of 1.6, that 'Emotional skills' play an important role for key account managers with cross-cultural tasks and responsibilities.

The largest consents with an average of 1.5 and 1.6 received the statements 'Comfortable working with people from different cultures' and 'Ability to relate to and interact with people of different personalities and backgrounds', respectively. Both statements are showing a similar and comparable content where key account managers have to work and interact with different individuals and personalities from various backgrounds. Therefore, key account managers should be open-minded at work to different ideas and values, and expression degree of flexibility. Thus, the statement 'Open-mindedly to different ideas and values' reflect with a broad consent of a mean of 1.7 this circumstance, that key account managers should be tolerant, receptive and showing patience and humility regarding individuals and personalities with different cultural-religious backgrounds. In contrast, the statements 'Ability to cope with constant change' and 'Sensitive to economic considerations and human needs' received less consent with a mean of 1.75. and 1.8 in kind of importance, respectively. Both statements are focusing more on the perception, processing and handling of change and demands in the surrounding and environment of key account managers.

All respondents, regardless of their cultural-religious backgrounds, demonstrated in similar assessment standards regarding 'Emotional skills'. The intention for investigating the 'Emotional skills' for key account manager has a prospective nature which means all the participants describe with their individual response the optimal job qualifications of a key account manager in an ideal world regarding making a good decision, take optimal action to solve problems, cope with change and succeed.

### 7.7.2 Intellectual skills

Regarding the category of 'Intellectual skills', the questionnaire contains six closed-end questions with Likert-ratings from 1 (very important) to 5 (unimportant):

- Developing an awareness of other cultures
- Being aware of the dangers of stereotyping
- Broad background and knowledge of world affairs and cultures
- Ability to notice details that Others might normally miss
- Diplomatic skills and sensitivity to different management styles
- Good listening, clarifying, questioning and responding skills

The overall results demonstrate a broad consent and approval with an average of 1.7, that 'Intellectual skills' play an important role for key account managers with cross-cultural tasks and responsibilities. In direct comparison to 'Emotional skills' with an average of 1.6, respondents attributed 'Intellectual skills' to a slightly lower level of importance of 1.7. It is evident that 'Good listening, clarifying, questioning and responding skills' have been evaluated with the highest-level importance in the category of 'Intellectual skills'. The result of 1.5 demonstrates that the respondents widely agree that key account managers need to practice active listening and effective questioning in order to reduce misunderstandings or misinterpretations, especially in the field of cross-cultural management. Also 'consciousness' as a skill set was evaluated with a higher level of importance for key account managers. The statements 'Developing an awareness of other cultures' and 'Diplomatic skills and sensitivity to different management styles' have been assessed with an average of 1.7 each. Both statements imply that a certain level of 'consciousness' needs to be developed in order to comprehend the existence of different cultural-religious backgrounds and to handle effectively different styles of management and leadership. A similar result received the statements 'Being aware of the dangers of stereotyping', 'Broad background and knowledge of world affairs and cultures', and 'Ability to notice details that Others might normally miss' with a mean of 1.8 each. In detail, stereotyping as an over-generalized belief or expectation about a particular category

of people can be classified as a risk or threat in business management, especially working with individuals from different cultural-religious backgrounds and regions. Furthermore, key account managers should also show a certain level of education regarding world affairs in order to follow and understand international activities that involve the governments, politics, economies of different countries. Also, the capabilities for 'detail-orientation' might play an important role for key account managers in order to pay attention to those small details in cross-cultural management, which probably other sales professionals overlook or miss. Overall, the responses demonstrate clearly the *raison d'être* for 'Intellectual skills' regarding the evaluation, organisation, and application of knowledge and understanding. All respondents, regardless of their cultural-religious backgrounds, demonstrated in similar assessment standards regarding 'Intellectual skills'. The intention for investigating the 'Intellectual skills' for key account manager has a prospective nature which means all the participants describe with their individual response the optimal job qualifications of a key account manager in an ideal world regarding making a good decision, take optimal action to solve problems, cope with change and succeed.

### 7.7.3 Experiential skills

Regarding the category of 'Experiential skills', the questionnaire contains three closed-end questions with Likert-ratings from 1 (very important) to 5 (unimportant):

- Significant experience in and enjoyment of intensive cross-cultural environments
- Sensitivity and awareness of how one's actions may affect others
- Adept in new environments and at understanding the motivations of others

The overall results demonstrate a broad consent and approval with an average of 1.8, that 'Experiential skills' play an important role for key account managers with cross-cultural tasks and responsibilities. In direct comparison to 'Emotional skills' with an average of 1.6 and 'Intellectual skills' with an average of 1.7, respondents attributed to 'Experiential skills' a slightly

lower level of importance of 1.8. In details, the statement 'Sensitivity and awareness of how one's actions may affect others' showed the highest rating of importance of 1.6 in the section of 'Experiential skills' as this skill of how one's action may affect others is one of the foundations to respect and value individuals from other cultural-religious backgrounds. This awareness focuses on being sensitive and adaptive to individual cultural differences and relies on reflection and self-understanding. In comparison, the statements 'Significant experience in and enjoyment of intensive cross-cultural environments' and 'Adept in new environments and at understanding the motivations of others' received lower importance levels of an average of 1.9 each. Both statements are focusing on the cross-cultural environments which are facing key account managers in terms of enjoyment and the ability to adapt to these new environments. A statistical difference between different cultural-religious backgrounds was not measurable nor perceptible. All respondents, regardless of their cultural-religious backgrounds, demonstrated in similar assessment standards regarding 'Experiential skills'. The intention for investigating the 'Experiential skills' for key account manager has a prospective nature which means all the participants describe with their individual response the optimal job qualifications of a key account manager in an ideal world regarding making a good decision, take optimal action to solve problems, cope with change and succeed.

#### 7.7.4 Physical presence

Regarding the category of 'Physical presence', the questionnaire contains one closed-end questions with a Likert-rating from 1 (very important) to 5 (unimportant):

- High degree of physical stamina; excellent and robust health

The result of this question is demonstrating the lowest level of importance compared to 'Emotional skills', 'Intellectual skills', and 'Experiential skills'. Therefore, an average of 2.2 is statistically different from other skillsets for key account managers. Of course, the 'Physical presence' in terms of key account managers with robust health and adequate fitness seems to be required in order to represent his employer and their products and services in front of customers and business partners. But on the other hand, a high degree of physical stamina

and fitness seems to be an important attribute for a key account manager but not one of the most important skillsets for cross-cultural management.

#### 7.7.5 Summary & Hypothesis

Cross-cultural skills for key accounts are a mix of emotional, intellectual, and experiential capabilities and competencies instead of a single predominate aptitude. The analysed data can clearly demonstrate a ranking of cross-cultural skill sets according to the key account management. Therefore, study participants evaluated emotional skills as one of the most important qualifications for key account managers, followed by intellectual skills and experiential skills. Therefore, hypothesis 10 'Cross-cultural skills for key accounts are a mix of emotional, intellectual, and experiential capabilities and competencies instead of a single predominate aptitude.' has to be accepted.

Finally, the physical stamina or presence seems to be less important. The emotional skill set showing a significance of  $<.005$  difference compared to other cross-cultural qualifications. Intellectual and experiential skills aren't showing any statistical difference among themselves and can be considered as equal competencies. All three skills of emotional, intellectual and experiential skills demonstrate a clear statistical difference of  $<.005$  to physical presence or stamina. Strong physical stamina is less important for the cross-cultural capabilities and competences of key account managers. Study participants agree with an average of 2.2 that the physical stamina is a valuable factor for key account managers. A statistical significance was measurable by  $<.005$ . Therefore, hypothesis 11 'A strong physical stamina is less important for the cross-cultural capabilities and competences of key account managers.' has to be accepted.

## 8 Discussion

The first part of the discussion will provide a review on achieving the study aim and objectives according to the research outcome. The second part will give a theoretical reflection of cross-cultural key account management by analysing the current situation of key account management and providing assumptions to solve identified challenges in cross-culture. The third part of the discussion is using the obtained results and current knowledge to develop a first configurational framework on key account management in the context of cross-culture. The fourth part of the discussion will provide manager implications for key account management according to the overall research outcome. The last part of the discussion is focusing on a critical dispute of the present study and its research outcome analysing the strengths and the weaknesses as well as the opportunities and threats.

### 8.1. Review on achieving research aim and objectives

The research aim, described in chapter two, highlights the desire to develop a new conceptual perspective for sales organisations according to cross-cultural key account management. In order to accomplish this major study aim, three research objectives have been formulated.

#### 8.1.1 Cultural similarity and cultural diversity

According to the first research questions, the study was intended to investigate the differences of the respective cultural-religious backgrounds from various geographic areas to understand different beliefs, values, practices, norms and patterns. The collected data from the questionnaire demonstrates verifiable differences for the manifestation of the cultural dimensions throughout the various cultural-religious backgrounds and geographies. For all investigated cultural dimensions, such as uncertainty avoidance, power distance, in-group collectivism, human orientation, institutional collectivism, assertiveness, future orientation, and performance orientation, statistical analyses demonstrate significant differences between the various cultural groups. Therefore, the present study can highlight differences in society's

tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity, called uncertainty avoidance. Notably, the study population for 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic' and 'Slavic-Orthodox' showed the highest index for uncertainty. Whereas, the uncertainty index is the lowest from participants with a 'Western Industrial' background. Furthermore, the study results also confirm a significant difference in the dimension of power distance throughout the investigated cultural-religious regions. Notably, the societies of 'Latin America', 'Jewish', and 'Arabic Turkish-Islamic' intent are more likely to conform to a hierarchy where people with rank position have their privileged places. Whereas, the societies of 'Slavic-Orthodox', 'Western Industrial', and 'South-East Asia' tend to try to distribute power equally. Regarding in-group collectivism, participants from a 'Jewish', 'Western Industrial' and 'Latin America' regions emphasize relatedness with groups and accept duties/obligations as important factors of the social group behaviour. In contrast, individuals from 'South-East Asia' and 'Slavic-Orthodox' regions, show lower in-group collectivism and therefore emphasize more rationality in behaviour and focus more on personal needs and attitudes. Regarding human orientation', the population with an 'Arabic-Turkic Islamic' and 'Slavic-Orthodox' background demonstrated a lower level of 'Humane Orientation', which describe a culture where the expression of nonverbal signs, greetings and welcome only takes place informal interactions and talking about feelings in public is not predominate. Whereas the population for 'Western Industrial', 'South-East Asia', and primarily 'Jewish' is showing a higher level of humane orientation', where the express and display of feelings and emotions in public is part of their society and cultural environment. Regarding institutional collectivism, the participants with 'Jewish' background are more focused on individual interest instead to follow the preference and value of a group. A similar picture is seen for 'Western Industrial' and 'South-East-Asia'. On the opposite, participants from 'Latin America' are more willing to follow values and preference of groups instead of individual interest. The cultural difference has been identified for assertiveness as the study population for 'Jewish', 'Latin America' and 'Western Industrial' see their societal environment as more open-minded due to democratic political system where the power comes from the people. In contrast, the cultural background of 'South-East Asia', 'Arabic Turkic-Islamic', and 'Slavic-Orthodox' are experiencing a more autocratic



political system, where free elections and public debates are not partly unwanted or prohibited. Also, the investigation of 'Future orientation' indicates that the respondents with a 'Slavic-Orthodox' background have a higher propensity to save now for the future by working for long-term success and goals. On the other end, respondents with a 'Jewish' or 'Latin America' background are more characterized by living and spending now, rather than saving for the future. Finally, the last investigated cultural dimension performance orientation could demonstrate that individuals in 'Latin America' and 'Western Industrial' are more performance-oriented than the other cultural-religious backgrounds and regions. Overall, this part of the research study can demonstrate significant cultural-religious differences and of course, similarities between different geographic regions regarding their psychological, sociological, geopolitical and anthropological backgrounds. Furthermore, these results also provide evidence that the different types of cultural dimensions will be found in various levels of manifestations and separability. Therefore, a major differentiator in terms of a single cultural dimension does not exist as a culture must be observed and evaluated by a multidimensional perspective.

Overall, the present study was using a similar study design compared to the investigations of Geert Hofstede and the GLOBE research program. Both research studies can be considered as one of the first comprehensive investigations of societal culture across multiple countries in cross-culture marketing management research. The Hofstede model is based on a survey at IBM conducted twice around 1968 and 1972, generating more than 116,000 questionnaires across 50 countries and three regions. Initially, Geert Hofstede was defining four primary cultural dimensions to differentiate between cultures: power distance, individualism, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance. The Hofstede model was expanded in 2001 and 2005 across 46 countries (Hofstede, 2001) (Hofstede, 2005). In contrast, the GLOBE study was designed to measure the effect of culture on leadership and organisations, and also the human conditions of members of the respective societies and cultures. The GLOBE study focused on different industry sectors and collected responses of over 17,000 managers in over 951 organisations and from 62 different societies. The GLOBE research program aimed to replicate

and expand the outcome of Hofstede's research by defining nine cultural dimensions and investigating further the impact of culture on leadership (House, 2014) (Shi and Wang, 2011). Both research approaches and concepts from Geert Hofstede and GLOBE could demonstrate conclusive differences of regional cultures in terms of beliefs, patterns, reflections, values, attitudes and others, so that presence of cross-culture can be considered as verified. The present study differs significantly in the scale of investigation, as only 432 individuals participated globally to the questionnaires compared to thousands of respondents from Hofstede and GLOBE. But, in the same way the current investigation can deliver similar results and observations in cross-culture. The study clearly demonstrates significant differences in the nine cultural dimensions between the different religious-cultural regions and geographies. On a more detailed perspective, some results in the cross-cultural dimensions vary between the Hofstede, the GLOBE and the present study. As an example, at this study, respondents from 'Latin America' and 'Western Industrial' are demonstrating a strongly preference for performance orientation compared to other investigated cultures. Whereas the GLOBE research sees 'Latin America' below the average of the study population. But in contrast, the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance generates similar results in the Hofstede, the GLOBE and the present study, where 'Latin America' owns a middle position of all investigated cultural-religious backgrounds (Hofstede, 2001) (Hofstede, 2005) (House, 2014). Of course, the Hofstede and GLOBE studies are not free of criticism. The major concerns in the academic field are focusing on the applied methodology and that many items within a cultural dimension seem unrelated or that items related to several cultural dimensions (Venaik and Brewer, 2008a) (Javidan, House, Dorfman et al, 2006) (Tang and Koveos, 2008) (Venaik and Brewer, 2010). Other noteworthy studies investigating culture are Trompenaars model of national culture differences (Trompenaars, 1993), Schwartz's theory of basic human values (Schwartz and Bilsky, 1987) (Schwartz, 1992) and Leung's model for social beliefs (Leung and Bond, 2004). All listed studies and models above can differentiate and classify geographies or regions according to their cultural-religious backgrounds by using predefined parameters.

Moreover, it is also observable that a scholarly dispute is ongoing on the applied methodologies and various cultural dimensions for the assessment of national culture differences. More importantly, the present study was designed on one side to confirm culture differences in the study population, so that a new evidence-based configurational perspective on cross-cultural key account management can be developed. However, on the other side, the present study was also designed to make a scholarly contribution to cross-cultural marketing management research by collecting field-based data on cultural dimensions.

#### 8.1.2. Cross-cultural key account management

According to the second research questions, the study was intended to investigate the organisational awareness and capabilities for the implementation and institutionalization cross-cultural key account management. First, the study could demonstrate that around 75% of the sales organisations classify specific customers as high-value accounts which require a long-term mutual partnership. The study also provides evidence that 65% of the key accounts will be managed by dedicated key account managers or an account-specific team. However, on the other side, the study population confirm with over 45%, that their key account management is just implemented in the form of tasks and processes, whereas 35% define their key account management program as institutionalized throughout the whole organisation. These results from the study clearly demonstrate that key account management is a considerable part and function of sales organisations to foster the relationship to some preselected high-value and premium customers. Nevertheless, in the same way, the management of key accounts can be just implemented with tasks and procedures or fully institutionalized into the whole organisational culture and structure.

Overall, the findings in current scholarly literature are mainly based on qualitative research in terms of in-depth interviews. Only a minority of research data is coming from quantitative research activities, such as large-scale questionnaires or surveys. Those findings in key account management, gathered from interviews, can be classified as observations, which finally can be transformed into hypotheses. Therefore, it is scientific essential to evaluate or

test those observations and hypotheses in larger quantitative investigations. Due to the present outcome, this study can provide the first quantitative data regarding those scholarly observations and hypotheses in key account management research.

Moreover, the current scholarly literature is not consistently differentiating between the terms of 'implementation' and 'institutionalization' of key account management. Those terms will be used divergent to describe the integration process of key account management within the organisation. For a moment, both terms might have a similar meaning but differentiate substantial the way and level of organisational integration.

In the context of key account management, 'implementation' can be considered as a superficial integration process, while key account management is rooted in the organisation just by tasks and procedures for the sales teams. In contrast, 'institutionalization' is a horizontal and vertical integration process throughout the whole organisation so that all corporate functions assist the key account management program (Barki and Pinsonneault, 2005).

A first way to investigate the implementation and institutionalisation process is to analyse the respective sales organisation according to how key accounts are managed. In the literature, it has been described as the presence of specific account teams within an organisation, who supports the management of key accounts. Those account teams can be considered as a new organisational entity, consist of key account managers and other organisational functions and resources (Pardo, 2001). Those functional account teams assist the process of troubleshoot implementation and finally bring the key account partnership into another level of excellence (McDonald, Millman and Rogers, 1997). Moreover, those teams can be considered as a focal position in the institutionalization of key account management as they play a crucial part in organisational learning and collaboration, knowledge management and solution co-creation (Hakanen, 2014) (Fleischer, 2010). Therefore, a dedicated sales teamwork as skilled coordinators within an organisation in order to institutionalize key account management through a multi-level and multi-functional approach (Millman and Wilson, 1996).

The study demonstrates the importance of a professional sales team within the sales organisation as 65% of the key accounts will be managed by dedicated key account managers

or a key account-specific team. In the same direction, these dedicated sales teams support the transformation process of the organisation fundamentally in terms of the institutionalization of the key account management program. This study highlights that only 35% of the key account management programs are institutionalized throughout the whole organisation. Therefore, this outcome of the study describes the dual function of a dedicated key account sales team in terms of managing the customer experience and in the same manner to drive the corporate institutionalization of the key account management program. Key account managers and teams operate as the central points for cross-departmental collaborations and partnerships.

The outcome of this study demonstrates that the awareness and readiness for key account management differ between various organisational departments. Corporate functions with close interaction and touchpoints to commercial operations, like top management, customer service, and marketing, are more prepared and aware of the specific needs and requirements of key accounts. In comparison, other departments, which do not have a direct point of contact with key account management, such as human resources, supply chain, logistics, finance and others demonstrate a decreased preparedness to understand the value of the specific needs and requirements of key accounts. Therefore, a key account management program requires an organisational institutionalization, where cross-functional teams and departments fully understand the needs, demands and challenges of the dedicated sales teams and their key accounts.

The current scholarly literature supports the observation that corporate functions with close interaction and touchpoints to key account management are more prepared and aware of the specific needs and requirements of key accounts. Especially the involvement of the top management seems to be important as they stimulate an organisational culture that supports the key account management program in terms of forming a dedicated key account team, relationship building to key accounts, the tactical execution of the key account management program, and reducing the strategic uncertainty (Davies and Ryals, 2009) (Brehmer, Geiger and Rehme, 2009) (Tzempelikos, 2015) (Pereira, Tzempelikos, Trento Luiz et al, 2019).

Furthermore, the current scholarly literature also provides evidence that organisational functions without a direct touchpoint to the commercial operation are less aware and prepared for the key account management program, such as production and manufacturing (Millman and Wilson, 1996), supply chain (Millman and Wilson, 1995). In direct contrast, a synergy effect between R&D and key account management has been described, which supports the value creation, innovation process and the overall organisational motivation to manage key accounts (Wießmeier, Thoma and Senn, 2012).

In general, the entire company needs to be aware and ideally involved into the key account management program, as it will secure the quality of products and services in order to meet the account's needs and requirements. Therefore, enterprises with a key account management program should focus on conducting and developing expertise in the areas of leadership, human resources, technology, and production (Nätti and Palo, 2012). "Since trust is the key antecedent of deeper cooperation, it is crucial to enhance the factors that make the selling company trustworthy in the eyes of the account." (Ojasalo, 2001). Finally, the current study aligns with the first observations, reported in the literature but also provide a further research avenue in this particular area of cross-functional/departmental collaboration regarding key account management. As mentioned earlier, the success of key account management relies on the degree of institutionalization within the company and therefore on the engagement to other organisational functions. The institutionalization of key account management is part of the corporate development, which integrate and align the key account management framework at the organisational level. Whereas the operational key account management, including the key account manager and account teams, focuses mainly on the process of managing key accounts (Zupancic, 2008).

Before companies invest, plan and execute a key account management program across different geographies, a certain level of awareness and knowledge of cultural differences to their key customers, clients, and business partners must exist throughout the whole organisation. The research results confirm that around 58.9% of the companies are considering cultural differences to their key customers, clients, and business partners as an

important factor for success. In a similar scale, 63.9% of the respondents confirm that their companies are putting efforts in the awareness and knowledge of cultural differences to their key customers, clients, and business partners. These findings are supported by that around 52.8% of the respondents confirm that their companies include cross-cultural characteristics into the account profiles, like language preferences, religious holidays, specific norms of behavioural codes and others. But in the same way, around 30.5% of respondents provide evidence that their companies are facing problems in key account management relationships due to cross-cultural differences. These results demonstrate that enterprises are trying to develop a corporate atmosphere and environment for cross-cultural business management, but half of them are facing serious problems in key account management relationships due to cross-cultural differences. The present study also provides evidence, that 55.5% of the sales organisations put efforts in providing principles, guidelines and set of values to work cross-culturally, so actions will be created throughout all corporate levels to stem the problem of cross-cultural diversity of key account sales. A more in-depth culture-specific training, such as language learning, cultural insights, working abroad, and others will be offered by around 30.6% of the sales organisations. Also, the corporate awareness and readiness of cross-cultural diversity of key accounts within the company are crucial. A similar observation can be described that departments or organisational functions with a close distance to commercial operation, such as top management, customer service, marketing and others are much better prepared for the cross-cultural needs and requirements of key accounts. Therefore, the study participants indicate logistics, human resources, and finance are the corporate functions with the least perception and awareness of cross-cultural diversity between their company and respective key accounts.

The scholarly literature indicates that cross-cultural competence is one of the key players in global and international business management. Investigations show that cross-cultural differences between partners can be associated with a higher probability for business failures. Especially for key account management, organisational and individual cross-cultural competence should be present and therefore requires continuous development. In detail, the

individual 'cross-cultural competence is an individual's effectiveness in drawing upon a set of knowledge, skills, and personal attributes in order to work successfully with people from different national cultural backgrounds at home or abroad' (Johnson, Lenartowicz and Apud, 2006) (Jyoti and Kour, 2017). The development of organisational cross-cultural competences depends on the present institutional ethnocentrism, referring to the ability of an organisation to respond appropriately to cultural differences. This organisational ability to develop and maintain a cultural sensitivity throughout the whole organisation requires a specific set of competencies in awareness, knowledge and skills (Shapiro, Ozanne and Saatcioglu, 2008). This cultural sensitivity and intelligence are the basis of cultural confidence, where organisations gained the capabilities to master successfully international businesses across different cultural-religious geographies (Earley and Mosakowski, 2004b) (Earley and Mosakowski, 2004a).

In this context, cultural intelligence can be considered as a system of knowledge and skills which can form individuals to identify, adapt, and respond to cultural differences in their work environment. Therefore, knowledge refers to content knowledge of cultural domains and identities which support the mapping process of cross-cultural dimensions, expressed in values, attitudes, beliefs, and practices. Especially process knowledge of cultural domains is critical to understand cross-cultural encounter or problem-solving, and therefore helps the intercultural interaction. In contrast, the individual and organisational skill set are relevant for the maintenance of the cultural content knowledge but also for appropriate usage of knowledge in a cross-cultural environment. Therefore, perceptual, relational and adaptive skills will shape the cross-cultural interaction based on the pre-existing content knowledge. Besides, also, cultural metacognition plays an important role in reflecting content knowledge and skills in order to reach the desired outcome of cross-cultural interaction (Thomas, Elron, Stahl et al, 2008).

In consequence, organisations within a cross-cultural environment have to overcome the institutional ethnocentrism by creating content knowledge and supporting the development of appropriate skills sets and cultural metacognition. This cultural intelligence involves



organisational training, education and practices with cross-cultural interactions (Triandis, 2006). Especially, a comprehensive intercultural training program with a need-based analysis of participants capabilities, focusing on metacognition, motivation and behaviour (Earley and Peterson, 2004) (Earley, 2002). Importantly, those training and education are culture-specific approaches, where individuals are acquiring growing competences and capabilities in a certain culture. In the same time, individuals acquiring a higher cultural intelligence so that the interaction with another culture might be easier to face and to manage (Thomas, 2008).

#### 8.1.3. Individual cross-cultural competencies

According to the third research questions, the study was intended to investigate the individual awareness and ability for sales professionals to manage key accounts in a cross-cultural context and environment. This phenomenon is called psychic distance and refers to the degree to which an individual in one national culture feels comfortable in interacting with an individual from another culture. Therefore, the study investigated four different skill sets, focusing on emotional skills, intellectual skills, experiential skills and physical presence. The analysed data can demonstrate a ranking of cross-cultural skill sets according to the cross-cultural key account management. Therefore, study participants evaluated emotional skills as one of the most important qualifications for key account managers, followed by intellectual skills and experiential skills. Finally, the physical stamina or presence seems to be less important. The present study can demonstrate that key account managers should be skilled and qualified to work with people from different cultures and to have the ability to relate to and interact with people of different personalities and backgrounds. Therefore, key account managers should be open-minded at work to different ideas and values, and expression degree of flexibility. For the intellectual skill set, the research provides evidence that good listening, clarifying, questioning and responding skills have been evaluated with the highest-level importance in the category of intellectual skills. Furthermore, developing an awareness of other cultures and diplomatic skills and sensitivity to different management styles can be considered to comprehend the existence of different cultural-religious backgrounds and to handle effectively

different styles of management and leadership. Regarding experiential skills, the study highlights the importance of significant experiences and enjoyments of intensive cross-cultural environments, and to adapt to new environments and understanding the motivations of others. At last, a high degree of physical stamina and fitness seems to be less important for a key account manager in a cross-cultural environment.

According to the current literature, the development of cultural intelligence depends on different individual dimensions. In detail, cognitive skills refer to the amount of knowledge of other cultures which individual have adopted. Also, motivational skills play a fundamental role in the quality of cultural intelligence as this skill set refers to the energy and enthusiasm towards learning about other regional-cultural backgrounds. In order to execute cross-cultural knowledge, behavioural skills are required to use culturally appropriate terminology, tone and body language when interacting across culture (Sutherland, Edgar and Duncan, 2015). Besides these dimensions of capabilities, although cultural exposure seems to be highly relevant to develop, manifest and increase individual cultural intelligence. Therefore, experiential skills in terms of employment abroad, education abroad, vacation abroad or other experiences abroad support the skill sets of individuals in a cross-cultural environment (Crowne, 2008). In the same perspective, individual metacognitive capabilities also play a role in cultural intelligence, where people demonstrate behaviours of a quick application of previously learned information in order to handle and manage cross-cultural interactions. Furthermore, cultural intelligence refers also the individual abilities to adjust quickly, with minimal stress when cross-cultural interactions happen (Brislin, Worthley and Macnab, 2006). Altogether, individuals with high cultural intelligence are less prone to experience a high-stress level of burnout from their cross-cultural environment. People with high cultural intelligence are higher motivated in their cross-cultural work and finally profit from cross-cultural experiences and challenges (Rand, 2015). The current scholarly research supports the findings of the present study in terms of individual cross-cultural intelligence, where emotional, intellectual and experiential capabilities and experiences are crucial dimensions in the manifestation of

cross-cultural skills. Studies about individual stamina and fitness demonstrate the positive effect of cross-cultural intelligence on the coping of cross-cultural challenges.

## 8.2. Theoretical reflection on cross-cultural key account management

The present theoretical reflection on cross-cultural key account management will discuss the intra-organizational determinants, the impact of cross-culture on organisations and finally, the interaction process in terms of cross-cultural marketing management. In conclusion, this theoretical reflection is aimed to help to understand the practice and habit of key account management within a cross-cultural context.

### 8.2.1 Reflection on organisation

First, an organisation is defined as an entity, comprising multiple individuals that have the same particular purpose. These individuals are systematically structured and managed by a leader to achieve a need or to meet collective and agreed goals on a continuing basis in the form of coordinated activities (Griseri, 2013). Based on this definition, organisations exist in various forms and sizes, like institutions, corporations, governments, political parties, society, charities, partnerships and others.

Let us assume that we have an organisation, like a corporation, and we would like to characterise this organisation. There are many ways to describe or analyse an organisation, such as through structures, functions, processes, frameworks, connectivity, goals, vision and many others. Obviously, all these intra-organizational determinants or indicators are different in their perspectives and perceptions of an organisation. Every indicator forms a cluster based on sub-elements, which define and characterise the 'nature' of each indicator. However, if we bring all those single clusters together, we would generate an organisation-specific fingerprint. Further, different clusters might have a different weighting due to their nature of perspective, and influence the appearance of the organisational fingerprint differently. In the end, an organisation will differ from each other due to their organisational fingerprint, finally called

‘signature’ (see figure 12 A). Therefore, we can say that all determinants, called representative  $p_i$ , can be handled as a set of points in  $\mathbb{R}^d$  (dimension  $d$ ) and represent the point set of the cluster  $m$ . The cluster representative  $p_i$  and the representative weighting  $w_{pi}$  characterise the cluster  $m$ . Finally, the signature  $P$  of an organisation can be formulated as  $P = \{(p_1, w_{p1}), (p_2, w_{p2}), \dots, (p_m, w_{pm})\}$  with  $m$  clusters. In contrast, another organisation might have a signature  $P = \{(q_1, w_{q1}), (q_2, w_{q2}), \dots, (q_n, w_{qn})\}$  with  $n$  clusters, so that both organisations differ according to their own special signature  $P$ . In conclusion, this theoretical reflection on the organisational signature  $P$  symbolizes the importance of intra-organisational determinants in order to shape an organisation. A similar theoretical reflection can be drawn for cross-culture management. In a simplified way, culture is also characterized by various determinants such as beliefs, patterns, practices, values, rights, responsibilities, and others. In the same approach, all these cultural determinants or indicators can be considered to form clusters, which finally generate a culture-specific fingerprint, also called ‘signature’. Therefore, a culture can be formulated as  $C = \{(c_1, w_{c1}), (c_2, w_{c2}), \dots, (c_u, w_{cu})\}$  with  $u$  clusters, whereas the cluster representatives also underly a weighting  $w_{cu}$ . Another culture with a different signature can be formulated as  $C = \{(k_1, w_{k1}), (k_2, w_{k2}), \dots, (k_a, w_{ka})\}$  with  $a$  clusters. From the theoretical leverage point, if the difference  $D = [d_{c,k}]$  between the cultural cluster  $c_i$  and  $k_i$  minimal or 0, can we talk about identical or similar cultures. Cultures with larger difference  $D = [d_{c,k}]$  in their clusters, can be considered as different in terms of individual signatures. The threshold level for  $D = [d_{c,k}]$  to describe two or more cultures as different or non-identical must come from experimental studies. Finally, we would assume that relationship management between different cultures is ideal, when the cultural distance follows a minimal  $D = [d_{c,k}]$ . Another assumption is that culture will impact, probably influence, the respective organisational signature  $P$  of local enterprises in that cultural region. Therefore, we can formularize a dependency  $f(C) \rightarrow P$ , where the signature  $P$  of an organisation correlates with the cultural signature  $C$ . Regional enterprises implement and adapt cluster representative  $p_i$  which are common and used in their regional culture  $C$ . This assumption concludes that regional

enterprises can differ in terms of their signature  $P$  when the regional culture  $C$  differ to each other. The fact will lay the basis of cross-culture management, while enterprises with different signatures  $f(C_c) \rightarrow P = (p_n, w_{pn})$  and  $f(C_k) \rightarrow P = (q_n, w_{qn})$  have a mutual business relationship in terms of a supplier-customer interaction. Therefore, it is required to minimize the differences in the respective organisational signatures  $f(C_c) \rightarrow P = (p_n, w_{pn})$  and  $f(C_k) \rightarrow P = (q_n, w_{qn})$  as only enterprises with similar clusters or cluster representatives  $p_i$  yield into a mutually profitable business relationship. Furthermore, we assume especially for key account management across different cultural regions, the vendor or supplier with  $f(C_c) \rightarrow P = (p_n, w_{pn})$  has to adopt organisational structures and processes to mimic and isomorph the organisational signature  $f(C_k) \rightarrow P = (q_n, w_{qn})$  of key accounts. This transforming is called  $F = [f_{i,j}]$ , with  $f_{i,j}$  the flow between  $p_i$  and  $q_i$ , that minimize the overall efforts:  $\min \sum_{i=1}^m \sum_{j=1}^n f_{i,j} d_{i,j}$ . A more complex problem seems to be the management of key accounts from more than one different cultural regions as their culture-specific signature characterizes those key accounts  $P_q = (q_n, w_{qn})$ . Therefore, the supplier or vendor with the signature  $P_s = (p_n, w_{pn})$  has to implement and adapt cluster representative  $p_i$  which are common or used in those regional cultures in order to follow a minimal  $D = [d_{s,q}]$  for  $P_s$ . The challenge at that scenario is to find the optimal status for the cluster or cluster representative  $p_i$ , so that the supplier signature  $P_s$  has best-possible compromise to manage key accounts in different cultures and to serve customers in the same cultural region (see figure 12 B).

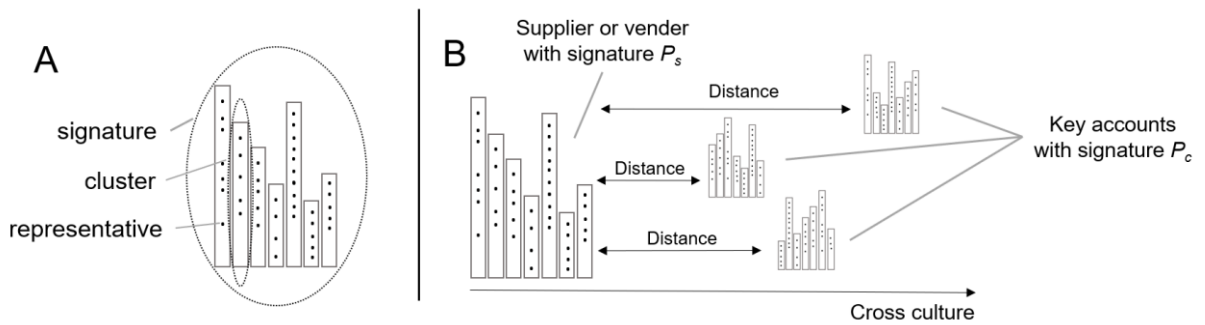


Figure 12: Theoretical reflection on organisations regarding cross-cultural management

### 8.2.2. Reflection on individuals

As above described, individuals in organisations are systematically structured and managed by a leader to achieve a need or to meet collective and agreed goals on a continuing basis in the form of coordinated activities. Therefore, individuals must be considered as key players in the context of cross-cultural management. Therefore, we can assume that we can differentiate at least two different types of individuals. First, we have individuals who are working directly in a cross-culture environment, such as key account managers. Those individuals experience different cross-culture settings and therefore act as a primary trigger for an organisational change process in terms of cross-cultural management. A second group are individuals who have not direct customer interactions within a cross-culture environment. Still, they experience the organisational change process from key account managers and the respective sales teams. Those individuals are generally in non-sales functions, such as finance, human resources, logistics, manufacturing and others.

Similar to the classification approach for organisations above, we can describe and characterise individuals through various parameters, such as cultural background, age, education, professional experiences, personality types, and many others. Overall, each parameter forms a cluster based on sub-elements, which define and characterise the 'nature' of this indicator. However, if we bring all those single clusters together, we would generate an individual-specific fingerprint. Further, different clusters might have a different weighting due to their nature of perspective and influence differently the appearance of the individual fingerprint. In the end, individuals will differ from each other due to their fingerprint, called 'signature'. Therefore, we can say that all determinants, called representative  $p_i$ , can be handled as a set of points in  $\mathbb{R}^d$  (dimension  $d$ ) and represent the point set of the cluster  $m$ . The cluster representative  $p_i$  and the representative weighting  $w_{pi}$  characterise the cluster  $m$ . Finally, the signature  $P$  of an individual can be formulated as  $Q = \{(p_1, w_{p1}), (p_2, w_{p2}), \dots, (p_m, w_{pm})\}$  with  $m$  clusters. Finally, we would assume that key account managers, working directly in a cross-culture environment, differ in their individual signature compared to people who have not a direct customer interaction within a cross-culture  $Q =$

$\{(q_1, w_{q1}), (q_2, w_{q2}), \dots, (q_n, w_{qn})\}$ . Especially, key account managers demonstrate a strong individual signature to understand, manage and work in a cross-cultural environment. The proposed change process within the organisation according to the needs and challenges of cross-cultural customers and accounts can be performed more efficiently when the difference  $D = [d_{c,k}]$  between individual signatures is minimum. The threshold level for  $D = [d_{c,k}]$  to describe two or more individual signatures as different or non-identical must come from experimental studies. Furthermore, we also can assume that individuals with direct cross-cultural customer/client interaction might have a stronger impact on the organisational change process and finally on the phenotype of the organisational signature. Overall the  $\sum Q_n$  can be classified as the function  $f(Q_n) \rightarrow P = (p_n, w_{pn})$  for the organisational change process and finally to determine the organisational signature.

In conclusion, this quick theoretical reflection on cross-cultural management is aimed to highlight the impact of culture on the shape and manifestation of organisational and individual signatures. Therefore, regional culture with its different phenotypes in behaviours, beliefs, patterns and others plays an important role in the organisational and individual change process to receive, accept, understand, manage and work in a cross-cultural environment. At the moment, we have only little scholarly knowledge to feed this assumption of the present theoretical reflection. Importantly, we need a first configurational perspective on key account management regarding cross-culture.

### 8.3. Configurational framework on key account management

This section is focusing on a first configurational framework on cross-cultural key account management according to the findings and outcome of the present research study. As described in chapter 4.2, a configurational framework symbolises an approach to develop a deeper and systematic understanding of an enterprise regarding organisational structures, functions, processes and practices. Furthermore, a configurational approach elucidates also the operational and strategic alignment of an organisation, focusing on business process re-

engineering, change management, leadership development, and employee engagement (Meyer, Tsui and Hinings, 1993b).

In this context of cross-cultural environment for key account management, a configurational framework examines the cross-cultural competencies of an organisation according to the adaptability and customizability of an established organisational framework to align and coordinate the needs and challenges of cross-cultural key accounts. Furthermore, a configurational framework highlights the capabilities and vulnerabilities of the key account management regarding personal attitudes, skills and knowledge to work in a cross-cultural environment.

This present configurational framework relies on three major attributes. First, the 'input' attribute describes the existence of a cross-cultural environment in all its facets. Second, the 'learning organisation' attribute elucidates the adaption and change process of an organisation in order to scope cross-cultural challenges in key account management. Finally, the 'output' attribute focuses on the gained competencies to overcome cross-cultural burdens and obstacles (see figure 13).

#### 8.3.1 'Input' – Attribute to confirm the existence of a cross-culture environment

This study provides evidence that national and regional cultures vary in those investigated cultural dimensions, such as uncertainty avoidance, power distance, in-group collectivism, human orientation, institutional collectivism, assertiveness, future orientation and performance orientation. These findings symbolize that socio-cultural-religious factors have a significant impact on individuals regards their behaviours, values, norms, beliefs, ways of opinion and others. Further findings of the study elucidate that a cross-culture environment challenges organisations to overcome organisational and individual ethnocentrism and to reach cross-cultural competencies. Finally, the results of this study regarding cross-culture will also be supported by other leading cultural studies, such as Hofstede and GLOBE studies. Those large investigations confirm that national and regional cultures vary in those investigated cultural dimension, called cultural distance and that they have a noticeably impact on global business



management, especially in the context of global key account management. Therefore, the 'input' attribute plays an important starting point for a learning organisation to decide the respective approach to reduce the cultural distance. In this context, two different approaches are notable for a configurational framework. First, organisational mimicry can be described as a manner of an organisation to imitate the values, beliefs and principles of another organisation, which is subject to an appreciable cross-cultural distance. Second, organisational isomorphism can be described as a corporate development process of an organisation to change their structures and processes according to the values, beliefs and principles of another organisation, which is also subject to an appreciable cross-cultural distance (Kostova and Roth, 2002). In the theory of neo-institutionalism, organisational mimicry and isomorphism are described as efforts to achieve rationality with uncertainty and constraint lead to homogeneity. Especially in key account management, institutional isomorphism and mimicry play a significant role as sales organisations, and key accounts rely and depend on each other regarding a greater centralization of resource supply and more professionalism. Furthermore, the greater the reliance between the organisations, the greater should be a similarity (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). In conclusion, organisations within a cross-cultural environment are pressured to conform to a set of institutionalized beliefs and processes that are deemed legitimate (Dickson, Den Hartog and Mitchelson, 2003). Finally, an 'input' attribute, symbolizing a cross-cultural environment, can be considered as the valid force for a learning organisation to overcome ethnocentrism in terms of an institutional isomorphism and mimicry by adapting organisational and individual cross-cultural competencies.

### 8.3.2. 'Learning organisation' – Attribute to overcome individual and organisational ethnocentrism

The ability of an organisation to apply institutional mimicry or isomorphism depends on corporate competencies to solve the challenges and hurdles of a cross-cultural environment. Especially, key account management relies fundamentally on the concept of a learning organisation. In theory, an organisation is organised to acquire, process, and disseminate

information from its environment, by itself creating knowledge, informing individuals that new insights have been generated, and engaging stakeholders for using them for the corporate development (Marsick and Watkins, 2003) (Jensen, 2005). This information is often based on experiences, and information provided by customers, consumers, business partners, suppliers, and competitors (Slater and Narver, 1994). Especially, cross-cultural competencies rely on a collaborative learning-oriented organizational culture, which includes a learning of environment-related factors (A), a continuous learning process within the organization (B); a system-oriented learning structure (C), an autogenously learned and knowledge creation environment (D), and a performance and goal-oriented learning systems (E) (Song, Kim and Chermack, 2008). In the end, an integrated network of a learning organisations affects the people level and the structural level so that an improvement of an organisational capacity regards cross-culture can be secured.

In this context, a learning organisation relies significantly on a cross-cultural training approach, where individuals get confidence in themselves and their ability to act effectively in a cross-cultural setting. Training will be effective in developing important cross-cultural skills, in facilitating cross-cultural adjustment, and in enhancing job performance. The gained insights and knowledge in cross-culture has to be transformed into practice in order to get greater depth and breadth (Black and Mendenhall, 1990). Modules of cross-cultural training should include the awareness of culture and cultural differences, the knowledge about different cultures, individual's emotion balance regarding inter-culture, and finally to practise various skills (Brislin and Yoshida, 1993). Therefore, trustworthy business partnerships and collaborations are requiring an adaption of cultural differences to overcome language barriers, different faiths, assumptions and behaviour norms (Grott, Cambra-Fierro, Perez et al, 2019) (Xiao and Boyd, 2010).

An important part of the conceptual framework also plays intra-organisational factors to implement and finally institutionalize corporate policies and procedures for cross-cultural key account management. The formularization process encourages the support of other organisational teams and functions regarding the management of key accounts, especially in

a cross-cultural environment (Moon and Gupta, 1997). In this context, the impact of intra-organisational determinants relies significantly on the learning organisation approach in terms of individual and organisational cross-cultural competencies. The learning organisation starts already with the hiring process, where potential candidates should meet characteristics to adapt and extend cross-cultural competencies. Those characteristics can be divided into objective attributes, such as international experiences, cultural background, education and others, and subjective attributes, such as cultural tolerance, proneness to change and adapt and others. Furthermore, those characteristics help to understand the potential of individuals to work in a cross-cultural environment, beginning with awareness and perception of operational difficulties. Furthermore, those characteristics also provide direction on how individuals receive information and stimuli regards socio-cultural, religious and political circumstances (Smith, Dowling and Rose, 2011).

Therefore, the framework of psychic and culture distances within an organisation determine the process of adoption, implementation or institutionalization of key account management. As those individual and corporate distances influence intra-organisational factors to scope the challenges and needs of key account management within a cross-cultural environment. Those factors, such as top management commitment, inter-functional coordination and the behaviour-related values of ability to customization, have been investigated in this current study and show a certain vulnerability for cross-culture. Finally, psychic and culture distances are symbolizing the ability and of course, the willingness to respond effectively to key accounts' needs. Therefore, the development of valuable capabilities, competencies allows organisations to allocate business-relevant resources to work in a cross-cultural key relationship marketing. Especially global key account management is facing challenges in corporate coordination and harmonization of knowledge, attention to segmenting customer requirement and gaining access to different levels of commercial and technical problem-solving capabilities (Millman, 1996). Therefore, an inadequate cooperate coordination and communication due to psychic and cultural distance can be considered as a cause of key account management failure in terms of disconnected activities (either geographically or

technically distinct, temporally dissociated) (Ivens and Pardo, 2008) (Pardo, 1999). In conclusion, key account management requires a cross-functional learning organisation to address the impact of psychic and cultural distance for corporate adaption, implementation or institutionalization.

### 8.3.3. 'Output' – Attribute to confirm the existence of cross-cultural competencies

The 'output' of a learning organisation is to provide evidence that individual and organisational cross-cultural competencies have been created and further developed. Overall, those competencies sharpen the capabilities and skills to learn about many foreign cultures, perspectives, tastes, trends, technologies and approaches to conduct business, to be skilful in working with people from many cultures simultaneously, in adapting to living in other cultures and to know how to interact with foreign colleagues as equals (Johnson, Lenartowicz and Apud, 2006).

In general, the learning organisation is aimed to generate culture-specific knowledge, including an in-depth focus on awareness and knowledge of cultural differences. It should cover the aspect of the complex environment in which international business operates, knowing about the different economic, political, legal, social, financial and technological systems that co-exist. The current study underpins that the 'output' attribute relies on the development of individual and organisational cross-cultural competencies. The results clearly demonstrate that emotional skills have the highest value for cross-cultural competencies in order to be comfortable working with people from different cultures, personalities, needs, values and backgrounds, followed by intellectual and experiential skills. The skillset of openness and mindfulness seems to be a crucial personality characteristic that is related to a person's capability to function effectively in diverse cultural settings (Thomas, 2006) (Ang, Van Dyne and Koh, 2006). In a similar framework, the present study also underpins the importance of organisational competencies to manage cross-cultural diversities in terms of awareness, consideration and conversion for cross-cultural interactions between at least two different cultural-religious regions and geographies. Overall, these competencies are fundamental for

the company journey starting from the identification of cross-cultural challenges, followed by the intention to make a corporate change and finally to make a decision to implement and probably to institutionalize this change throughout the entire company culture across all levels. Those competencies build than the anchor for corporate and business diplomacy management throughout multiple stakeholders in a company to effectively manage a cross-cultural environment (Saner, Yiu and Søndergaard, 2000) (Ordeix-Rigo and Duarte, 2009). Regarding global key account management, the 'output' attribute is also defining the direction of an organisation to manage cross-cultural high-value accounts or customers regarding cross-departmental efforts to orchestrate and connect all key account-specific task and activities within an organisation. Finally, the 'output' attribute can be seen as a trust factor for international business-to-business relationships, like key account management (Heffernan, 2004) (Salojärvi and Sainio, 2010).

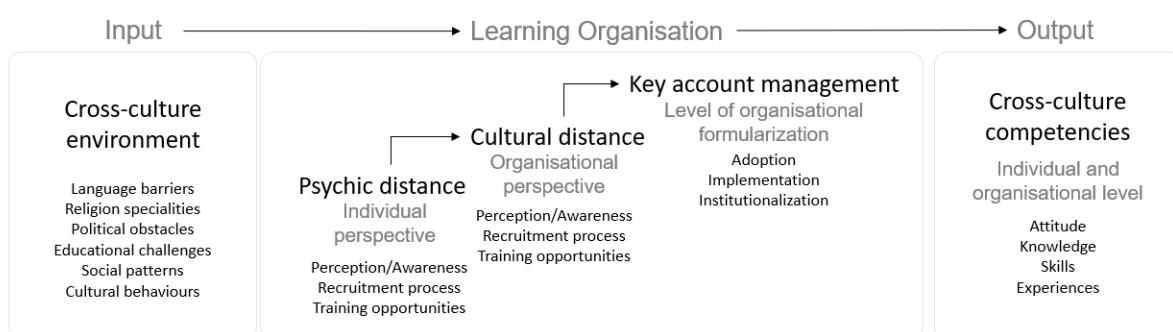


Figure 13: Revised configurational framework on key account management

#### 8.4. Managerial implications

A number of important managerial implications follow from the present research study. First, key account management can be affected by cross-cultural challenges, especially the management of global accounts or accounts located in other cultural-religious regions. Failures in key account management can be the results. Therefore, the study shows that organisations

would need a certain level of awareness and perception to recognise and finally understand cross-cultural challenges and needs.

Specifically, top managers involved with key accounts need to consider and debate the following questions: Does the company consider cross-culture already as an important topic in the sales organisation? Does the company already have seen a negative impact on the sales process due to cross-cultural obstacles? Does the company receive insights from the sales team for a change process to management those cross-culture burdens better? Does the company already spend efforts in people development, education and training regarding cross-culture management?

Furthermore, the present study highlights that key account management within the cross-cultural environment requires an adaption process throughout the whole organisation, in terms of the learning organisation. Importantly, organisational departments and functions should gain awareness and knowledge for cross-cultural management so that key account management can be supported more appropriate to their needs of global customers. In the same way, top managers need to consider and debate the following questions: Are organisational departments and functions in the company aware of the needs and requirements of global accounts or sales accounts from different religious-cultural regions? How can key account managers and other departments work together in order to meet or overcome cross-cultural challenges?

Furthermore, the present study highlights the importance of training and people development so that an organisation can better operate in the time of globalization. Therefore, specific training opportunities are required in order to experience and to learn the interaction with individuals from other religious-cultural regions. Therefore, top managers and key account managers need to consider and debate the following questions: What kind of training or education is appropriate for key account managers in order to start or continue the learning process for cross-culture business management? What other training opportunities are necessary or suitable to educate other organisational departments and functions to raise the capabilities to deal and manage cross-cultural needs and requirements.

Furthermore, the present study also highlights the importance of individual capabilities of key account managers in order to operate in a cross-cultural environment. Therefore, key stakeholders in sales operations need to consider and debate the following questions: What kind of skill sets are important for global key account managers? Do current key account managers meet the requirements to manage and handle global accounts? Does the company perform assessment centres, so that personal and professional aptitudes of a potential key account manager can be evaluated?

Finally, the present study provides further food for thoughts on organisational development in terms of corporate adaptability and capabilities according to the challenges of global account management. Especially, key stakeholder and top managers should consider and debate the following questions. Does the company require an organisational mimicry so that a similar cultural perception can be reflected in the key accounts? Or should the organisation put efforts into an institutional isomorphism in order to create homogeneity between the sales organisation and key accounts?

## 8.5. Limitations and directions for future research

There are a number of limitations of the present research study that should be mentioned here and also considered in future studies. The first five limitations are covering aspects of the study design, whereas the last five limitations provide more insights into the limitations of the outcome of the study.

First, the study performed quantitative research by using a standardized questionnaire to investigate the impact of cross-culture for global key account managers. Therefore, the research design is based on existing knowledge in the research field and on assumptions of the observed phenomenon in key account management. Therefore, future research should test those assumptions in qualitative research, like in interviews, so that further quantitative studies investigate the gained hypotheses.

Second, the present study developed first a questionnaire in the English language, which was further translated into Japanese, Chinese, and Spanish. All surveys have been translated according to the current standards for scholarly translation. But on the other side, the translation process was aimed to provide a correct but also simplified translation, without considering any local or regional accents and dialects. Especially, quantitative research using an immutable questionnaire cannot provide further explanations to inconclusive or less fathomable questions. This circumstance of not considering regional accents and dialects can cause misinterpretation or prevarication. Future research studies should investigate the occurrence and significance of local or regional accents and dialects of key account managers across different religious- cultural geographies.

Third, the questionnaire was designed to have a standardized approach in order to minimise mistakes by the participants during the process of providing answers. Therefore, the survey consists of closed-ended questions only so that the participants could choose the best suitable response option for the respective question. The close-ended questions have been phrased as questions or as statements. This design approach limited clearly to the opportunity of receiving the most appropriate response from the participants as close-ended questions are fixed and do not allow any individual comments and thoughts. Future studies with a quantitative research design should weigh the usage of close-ended questions versus open-ended questions.

Fourth, the present study was aimed to perform global quantitative research. In consideration of time and efficiency to complete this study, the questionnaire was created as a digital and web-based form, so that participants could enter through their terminal devices whenever they want to. Of course, digital questionnaires have also limitations compared to paper-pen-surveys, such as the availability of a computer or mobile device and a continues connectivity to the internet. Future studies should have options for participants to download the questionnaire for printing. Those answered paper-pen-surveys can be sent back to the principal investigators via post or digital channels as scanned copies.



Fifth, the total number of responses is 438, which is obviously above the theoretical sample size and therefore, can demonstrate a solid and valid data source. But in direct comparison to other global management research studies, like Hofstede and GLOBE, the present number of responses is just still a small fraction. Further research studies should increase the number of responses in order to gain a detailed picture of cross-cultural key account management.

Sixth, as above described the present study gathered 438 responses. In the analysis of the data shows, that participants with a Jewish and Slavic-Orthodox cultural background were slightly underrepresented compared to the other backgrounds. This limitation of an unequal distribution of responses might have an impact on the evaluation of the cultural dimensions regarding key account management.

Seventh, the present study is based on the usage of cultural dimensions, which are aimed to describe cultural-religious regions according to their cultural characteristics. Therefore, those cultural dimensions are artificial constructs, which have been used in management research already to compare different regions and geographies according to their various cultural beliefs, patterns, and attitudes. The limitation is that the used cultural dimensions in the present study are based on the Hofstede and GLOBE studies, which have been investigated cultural differences in business management and leadership. For future research, other cultural aspects could also play in global key account management, which has not been considered here. As key account management relies on establishing and building trustful relationships between business partners so that unidentified cross-cultural factors might demonstrate an impact.

Eight, a similar limitation can be defined for cultural distance. This term is aimed to describe the similarity or the heterogeneity of at least two different cultural regions. The cultural distance will be described by using cultural dimensions in order to demonstrate the cultural variety. Therefore, the cultural distance is based on the outcomes of the Hofstede and GLOBE studies, but other cultural aspects might also play an important role in global key account management, which have not been considered yet.

Ninth, the present study investigated for the first time the cross-cultural effects for key account management and its organisations. Therefore, the findings and outcomes of this study can be considered as the first scientific references in the field which would require more research activities in order to build a valid conceptual framework for key account managers in a cross-cultural environment.

Tenth, the managerial implications as the consequence of the study outcome are also the first by their nature, which requires further investigations in order to define more precise guidance and principles for key account managers.

## 9. Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study demonstrates that sales organisations experience cross-cultural challenges in their key account management programs. The variances in the respective cultural dimensions between sales organisations and key accounts require a corporate development of cross-cultural competencies. International companies should be encouraged to support the process of a learning organisation so that cross-cultural challenges within the key account process are timely identified and managed adequately. Especially, organisations with a global key account approach are under obligations to provide advanced training and educational opportunities for key account managers. These strategic interventions enable an organisation to execute a cross-functional key account management approach that meets the cultural-religious requirements and needs of important strategic customers. In the end, the results of the present research study will help organisations to increase the awareness of cross-culture at international businesses at the key account level. Furthermore, the outcome of the present study also supports the research area of key account management as important findings have been made and can be considered as one of the first pieces of the puzzle in cross-cultural key account management.

## References

- Abdelal, R., Herrera, Y. M., Johnston, A. I. and McDermott, R. (2012) *Measuring Identity : A Guide for Social Scientists*.
- Abratt, R. and Kelly, P. M. (2002) Customer–Supplier Partnerships. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 31(5), 467-476.
- Adler, N. J. and Aycan, Z. (2018) Cross-Cultural Interaction: What We Know and What We Need to Know. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 5(1), 307-333.
- Ahmad, S., Schroeder, R. G. and Sinha, K. K. (2003) The Role of Infrastructure Practices in the Effectiveness of Jit Practices: Implications for Plant Competitiveness. *Journal of Engineering and Technology Management*, 20(3), 161-191.
- Al-Zefeiti, S. M. B. and Mohammad, N. A. (2015) Methodological Considerations in Studying Transformational Leadership and Its Outcomes. *International Journal of Engineering Business Management*, 7(Godište 2015), 7-10.
- Alhussan, F. B., Al-Husan, F. B. and Alhesan, L. (2017) The Role of Senior Executives in Managing Key Customers in Arab Context. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 32(6), 825-835.
- Alvarado, M. a., Romero-Salcedo, M. and Sheremetov, L. (2004) A Corporative Memory Based on the User Profiles. *Expert Systems with Applications*, 26(1), 87-94.
- Andrews, T. G. and Mead, R. (2009) *Cross-Cultural Management: Critical Perspectives on Business and Management*. Routledge.
- Ang, S., Van Dyne, L. and Koh, C. (2006) Personality Correlates of the Four-Factor Model of Cultural Intelligence. *Group & Organization Management*, 31(1), 100-123.
- Ashish, G. and Sahu, G. P. (2012) A Literature Review and Classification of Relationship Marketing Research. *International Journal of Customer Relationship Marketing and Management*, 3(1), 56-81.
- Awang, Z. (2012) *Research Methodology and Data Analysis*. Penerbit Universiti Teknologi MARA Press.
- Babbie, E. R. (2018) *Basics of Social Research*. Cengage Learning.
- Bajpai, N. (2011) *Business Research Methods*. Pearson Education India.
- Barki, H. and Pinsonneault, A. (2005) A Model of Organizational Integration, Implementation Effort, and Performance. *Organization science*, 16(2), 165-179.

Barrett, J. (1986) Why Major Account Selling Works. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 15(1), 63-73.

Beiske, B. (2007) *Research Methods: Uses and Limitations of Questionnaires, Interviews, and Case Studies*. GRIN Verlag GmbH.

Berry, L. L., Carbone, L. P. and Haeckel, S. H. (2002) Managing the Total Customer Experience. *MIT Sloan management review*, 43(3), 85-89.

Biesta, G. (2010) *Pragmatism and the Philosophical Foundations of Mixed Methods Research*. SAGE Publications.

Black, J. S. and Mendenhall, M. (1990) Cross-Cultural Training Effectiveness: A Review and a Theoretical Framework for Future Research. *Academy of management review*, 15(1), 113-136.

Blair, J., Czaja, R., Blair, E. A. and Sage (2014) *Designing Surveys : A Guide to Decisions and Procedures*. SAGE.

Blythe, J. (2002) Using Trade Fairs in Key Account Management. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 31(7), 627-635.

Bolarinwa, O. (2015) Principles and Methods of Validity and Reliability Testing of Questionnaires Used in Social and Health Science Researches. *Nigerian Postgraduate Medical Journal*, 22(4), 195-201.

Boyle, B. A. (1996) The Importance of the Industrial inside Sales Force: A Case Study. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 25(5), 339-348.

Brace, I. (2018) *Questionnaire Design : How to Plan, Structure and Write Survey Material for Effective Market Research*. Kogan Page.

Bradley, C. (1994) *Translation of Questionnaires for Use in Different Languages and Cultures*. Harwood Academic

Brady, N. (2004) In Search of Market Orientation: An Experiment in Key Account Management. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 22(2), 144-159.

Brehmer, P. O., Geiger, S. and Rehme, J. (2009) Proactive and Reactive: Drivers for Key Account Management Programmes. *European Journal of Marketing*, 43(7/8), 961-984.

Brislin, R., Worthley, R. and Macnab, B. (2006) Cultural Intelligence: Understanding Behaviors That Serve People's Goals. *Group & Organization Management*, 31(1), 40-55.

Brislin, R. W. (1970) Back-Translation for Cross-Cultural Research. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 1(3), 185-216.

Brislin, R. W. and Yoshida, T. (1993) *Improving Intercultural Interactions: Modules for Cross-Cultural Training Programs*. Sage Publications.

- Brudner, E. (2020) *The 4 Most Common Sales Org Structure [+ Pros/Cons]*, 2020. Available online: <https://blog.hubspot.com/sales/pros-and-cons-sales-organizational-designs-chart> [Accessed].
- Cahill, D. J. (1998) Key Account Management. *International Marketing Review*, 15(3), 205-214.
- Camison, C. and González Cruz, T. (2020) Competitiveness, Organizational Management, and Governance in Family Firms. Hershey.
- Chidlow, A., Plakoyiannaki, E. and Welch, C. (2014) Translation in Cross-Language International Business Research: Beyond Equivalence. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 45(5), 562-582.
- Chin, T. and Rowley, C. (2018) Chapter Seven - Cross-Cultural Management: A Globalized Production Network, in Chin, T. & Rowley, C. (eds), *The Future of Chinese Manufacturing* Elsevier, 191-216.
- Christy, A. and Tracy, T. (2015) Creative Strategies in Social Media Marketing: An Exploratory Study of Branded Social Content and Consumer Engagement. *Psychology & Marketing*, 32(1), 15-27.
- Colletti, J. A. and Tubridy, G. S. (1987) Effective Major Account Sales Management. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 7(2), 1-10.
- Core, A. (2019) *Process: Sales Org Structure*, 2019. Available online: <https://almanac.io/docs/process-sales-org-structure-069f4a6ff183f1b25957db76158375a1> [Accessed].
- Creswell, J. W. and Creswell, J. D. (2018) *Research Design : Qualitative, Quantitative & Mixed Methods Approaches*. SAGE.
- Crosby, L. A. and Stephens, N. (1987) Effects of Relationship Marketing on Satisfaction, Retention, and Prices in the Life Insurance Industry. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 24(4), 404-411.
- Cross, T. L. (1989) *Towards a Culturally Competent System of Care: A Monograph on Effective Services for Minority Children Who Are Severely Emotionally Disturbed*.
- Crowne, K. A. (2008) What Leads to Cultural Intelligence? *Business Horizons*, 51(5), 391-399.
- Crystal, D. (2000) Emerging Englishes. *English Teaching Professional*(14), 1-6.
- Curasi, C. F., Boles, J. and Reynolds, R. (2018) Key Account Buying Team Members' Emotional Responses Awarding Multi-Million Dollar Sales Contracts. *Industrial Marketing Management*.
- Das, K. (2009) Relationship Marketing Research (1994-2006): An Academic Literature Review and Classification. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 27(3), 326-363.

- Daugherty, P. J., Ellinger, A. E. and Plair, Q. J. (1997) Using Service to Create Loyalty with Key Accounts. *The International Journal of Logistics Management*, 8(2), 83-91.
- Davies, I. A. and Ryals, L. (2009) A Stage Model for Transitioning to Kam. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 25(9-10), 1027-1048.
- Davies, I. A. and Ryals, L. (2013) Attitudes and Behaviours of Key Account Managers: Are They Really Any Different to Senior Sales Professionals? *Industrial Marketing Management*, 42(6), 919-931.
- Davies, I. A. and Ryals, L. J. (2014) The Effectiveness of Key Account Management Practices. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 43(7), 1182-1194.
- De Alwis, A. C. and Rajaratne, W. D. H. M. (2011) A Study on Measuring Return on Investment of a Key Account Management Training Program. *Scientific papers of the University of Pardubice*.
- De Swaan, A. (2013) *Words of the World: The Global Language System*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Denison, D. R. (1990) *Corporate Culture and Organizational Effectiveness*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Denscombe, M. (2009) *The Good Research Guide : For Small-Scale Social Research Projects*. Open University Press.
- Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (2018) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*.
- Dickson, M. W., Den Hartog, D. N. and Mitchelson, J. K. (2003) Research on Leadership in a Cross-Cultural Context: Making Progress, and Raising New Questions. *The leadership quarterly*, 14(6), 729-768.
- DiMaggio, P. J. and Powell, W. W. (1983) The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields. *American Sociological Review*, 48(2), 147-160.
- Distribution, S. S. (2017) *Sap Sd Organizational Structure*, 2017. Available online: <https://erproof.com/sd/free-training/sap-sd-organizational-structure/> [Accessed].
- Donald, J. G. (1985) Intellectual Skills in Higher Education. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 15(1), 52-68.
- Dowell, D., Morrison, M. and Heffernan, T. (2015) The Changing Importance of Affective Trust and Cognitive Trust across the Relationship Lifecycle: A Study of Business-to-Business Relationships. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 44, 119-130.
- Durif, F., Geay, B. and Graf, R. (2013) Do Key Account Managers Focus Too Much on Commercial Performance? A Cognitive Mapping Application. *Journal of Business Research*, 66(9), 1559-1567.

Earley, P. C. (2002) Redefining Interactions across Cultures and Organizations: Moving Forward with Cultural Intelligence. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 24, 271-299.

Earley, P. C. and Mosakowski, E. (2004a) Cultural Intelligence. *Harvard business review*, 82(10), 139-146.

Earley, P. C. and Mosakowski, E. (2004b) Toward Culture Intelligence: Turning Cultural Differences into a Workplace Advantage. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 18(3), 151-157.

Earley, P. C. and Peterson, R. S. (2004) The Elusive Cultural Chameleon: Cultural Intelligence as a New Approach to Intercultural Training for the Global Manager. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 3(1), 100-115.

EF English Proficiency Index, E. F. (2018) *Ef English Proficiency Index*. London.

El Sawy, O. A., Malhotra, A., Park, Y. and Pavlou, P. A. (2010) Seeking the Configurations of Digital Ecodynamics: It Takes Three to Tango. *Information Systems Research*, 21(4), 835-848.

Fan, P. and Zigang, Z. (2004) Cross-Cultural Challenges When Doing Business in China. *Singapore Management Review*, 26, 81+.

Fink, A. (2003) *How to Ask Survey Questions*. Sage.

Fleischer, M. (2010) Key Account Management in the Managed Markets: Visibility and Collaboration for Greater Effectiveness. *Journal of Medical Marketing*, 10(1), 53-60.

Flick, U. (2015) *Introducing Research Methodology : A Beginner's Guide to Doing a Research Project*. SAGE.

Ford, D. and McDowell, R. (1999) Managing Business Relationships by Analyzing the Effects and Value of Different Actions. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 28(5), 429-442.

Fricker, R. D. (2008) *Sampling Methods for Web and E-Mail Surveys*. SAGE Publication.

Friend, S. B., Curasi, C. F., Boles, J. S. and Bellenger, D. N. (2014) Why Are You Really Losing Sales Opportunities? A Buyers' Perspective on the Determinants of Key Account Sales Failures. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 43(7), 1124-1135.

Ganesan, S. (1994) Determinants of Long-Term Orientation in Buyer-Seller Relationships. *Journal of Marketing*, 58(2), 1-19.

Georges, L. (2007) Delivering Integration, Value, and Satisfaction through Key Account Manager's Communication. (Author Abstract)(Brief Article). *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 27(2), 188.

Gertsen, M. C. (1990) Intercultural Competence and Expatriates. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 1(3), 341-362.



- Gillham, B. (2015) *Developing a Questionnaire*. Bloomsbury.
- Goddard, W. and Melville, S. (2001) *Research Methodology : An Introduction*. Juta.
- Goddard, W. and Melville, S. (2011) *Research Methodology*. Juta & Co.
- Gounaris, S. and Tzempelikos, N. (2012) Conceptualization and Measurement of Key Account Management Orientation. *Journal of Business Market Management*, 5(3), 173-194.
- Gounaris, S. and Tzempelikos, N. (2013) Key Account Management Orientation and Its Implications: A Conceptual and Empirical Examination. *Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing*, 20(1), 33-50.
- Gounaris, S. and Tzempelikos, N. (2014) Relational Key Account Management: Building Key Account Management Effectiveness through Structural Reforms and Relationship Management Skills. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 43(7), 1110-1123.
- Graddol, D. (2004) The Future of Language. *Science*, 303(5662), 1329-1331.
- Greco, L., Walop, W. and McCarthy, R. (1987) Questionnaire Development: 2. Validity and Reliability. *CMAJ : Canadian Medical Association journal = journal de l'Association medicale canadienne*, 136, 699-700.
- Griseri, P. (2013) *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Management*. Sage Publications Ltd.
- Gronroos, C. (1993) Relationship Marketing, Service Competition and Customer Relationship Economics - Today's Challenge. *Ekonomiska Samfundets Tidskrift*, 46(4), 207-211.
- Grott, E. M., Cambra-Fierro, J., Perez, L. and Yani-de-Soriano, M. (2019) How Cross-Culture Affects the Outcomes of Co-Creation. *European Business Review*.
- Groves, R. M., Fowler, F. J., Couper, M. P., Lepkowski, J. M., Singer, E. and Tourangeau, R. (2013) *Survey Methodology*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Gu, F. F., Wang, J. J. and Wang, D. T. (2016) The Role of Sales Representatives in Cross-Cultural Business-to-Business Relationships. *Industrial Marketing Management*.
- Guenzi, P., Pardo, C. and Georges, L. (2007) Relational Selling Strategy and Key Account Managers' Relational Behaviors: An Exploratory Study. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 36(1), 121-133.
- Guenzi, P. and Storbacka, K. (2015) The Organizational Implications of Implementing Key Account Management: A Case-Based Examination. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 45, 84-97.
- Guesalaga, R. (2014) Top Management Involvement with Key Accounts: The Concept, Its Dimensions, and Strategic Outcomes. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 43(7), 1146-1156.

Guesalaga, R., Gabrielsson, M., Rogers, B., Ryals, L. and Marcos Cuevas, J. (2018) Which Resources and Capabilities Underpin Strategic Key Account Management? *Industrial Marketing Management*.

Guesalaga, R. and Johnston, W. (2010) What's Next in Key Account Management Research? Building the Bridge between the Academic Literature and the Practitioners' Priorities. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 39(7), 1063-1068.

Gummesson, E. (1994) Making Relationship Marketing Operational. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 5(5), 5-20.

Gundlach, G. T. and Wilkie, W. L. (2009) The American Marketing Association's New Definition of Marketing: Perspective and Commentary on the 2007 Revision. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 28(2), 259-264.

Gurung, A. and Prater, E. (2006) A Research Framework for the Impact of Cultural Differences on It Outsourcing. *Journal of Global Information Technology Management*, 9(1), 24-43.

Hadjikhani, A. and LaPlaca, P. (2013) Development of B2b Marketing Theory. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 42(3), 294-305.

Hakanen, T. (2014) Co-Creating Integrated Solutions within Business Networks: The Kam Team as Knowledge Integrator. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 43(7), 1195-1203.

Harden, A. and Zhang, Y. (2013) Attitudes and Buying Behaviours of Cross-Cultural College Students toward Apparel Products. *International Journal of Home Economics*, 6(2), 154.

Harker, M. J. and Egan, J. (2006) The Past, Present and Future of Relationship Marketing. *Journal of marketing management*, 22(1-2), 215-242.

Heffernan, T. (2004) Trust Formation in Cross-Cultural Business-to-Business Relationships. *Qualitative market research: An international Journal*.

Hilton, A. and Skrutkowski, M. (2002) Translating Instruments into Other Languages: Development and Testing Processes. *Cancer Nurs*, 25(1), 1-7.

Hofstede, G. (1980a) *Culture's Consequences : International Differences in Work-Related Values*. Sage.

Hofstede, G. (1984) *Cultural Dimensions in Management and Planning*. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 1(2), 81-99.

Hofstede, G. (2001) *Culture's Consequences : Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations across Nations*. Sage Publications.

Hofstede, G. (2005) *Culture's Consequences : International Differences in Work-Related Values*. Sage.

Hofstede, G. (2011) Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context. Online readings in psychology and culture, 2(1), 8.

Hofstede, G. H. (1980b) Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values. SAGE.

Holt, S. and McDonald, M. (2000) Managing Global Networks: The Role of the Global Account Manager, *Proceedings of the 16th Industrial Marketing and Purchasing (IMP) Conference*. Citeseer.

Homburg, C., Workman, J. P. and Jensen, O. (2002) A Configurational Perspective on Key Account Management. *Journal of Marketing*, 66(2), 38-60.

Horn, R., Chartered Institute of, P. and Development (2012) Researching and Writing Dissertations : A Complete Guide for Business and Management Students. Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

House, E. R. (1991) Realism in Research. *Educational Researcher*, 20(6), 2-9.

House, R. J. (2014) Culture, Leadership, and Organizations : The Globe Study of 62 Societies. SAGE Publ.

House, R. J., Hanges, P. J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P. W. and Gupta, V. (2004) Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: The Globe Study of 62 Societies. Sage publications.

Hox, J. J. and Boeijs, H. R. (2005) Data Collection, Primary Versus Secondary.

Hughes, J., Camden, A. A. and Yangchen, T. (2016) Rethinking and Updating Demographic Questions: Guidance to Improve Descriptions of Research Samples. *Psi Chi Journal of Psychological Research*, 21, 138-151.

Hughes, T., Foss, B., Stone, M. and Cheverton, P. (2007) Degrees of Separation: Technological Interactivity and Account Management. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 25(5), 315-335.

Hui Shi, L., Zou, S. and Cavusgil, S. T. (2004) A Conceptual Framework of Global Account Management Capabilities and Firm Performance. *International Business Review*, 13(5), 539-553.

Hulin, C., Netemeyer, R. and Cudeck, R. (2001) Can a Reliability Coefficient Be Too High? *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 10(1/2), 55-58.

Inglehart, R. (1997) Modernization and Postmodernization Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies. Princeton University Press.

Ivens, B., Niersbach, B. and Pardo, C. (2015) Key Account Management: Selling? Providing Services? ... or Both? *Marketing Review St. Gallen*, 32(6), 70-79.

Ivens, B. and Pardo, C. (2008) Key-Account-Management in Business Markets: An Empirical Test of Common Assumptions. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 23(5), 301-310.

Ivens, B. and Pardo, C. (2014) The Role of Key Account Management in Marketing and Sales Intelligence. *Marketing Review St. Gallen*, 31(4), 32-41.

Ivens, B. and Pardo, C. (2016) Managerial Implications of Research on Inter-Organizational Interfaces. *IMP Journal*, 10(1), 25-49.

Ivens, B., Pardo, C., Niersbach, B. and Leischnig, A. (2016a) Firm-Internal Key Account Management Networks: Framework, Case Study, Avenues for Future Research. *Industrial marketing management*, 58, 102-102.

Ivens, B., Pardo, C., Salle, R. and Cova, B. (2009) Relationship Keyness: The Underlying Concept for Different Forms of Key Relationship Management. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 38(5), 513-519.

Ivens, B. S., Pardo, C., Niersbach, B. and Leischnig, A. (2016b) Firm-Internal Key Account Management Networks: Framework, Case Study, Avenues for Future Research. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 58, 102-113.

James, P. J., Tomasz, L. and Salvador, A. (2006) Cross-Cultural Competence in International Business: Toward a Definition and a Model. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 37(4), 525.

Javidan, M., House, R. J., Dorfman, P. W., Paul, J. H. and Mary Sully de, L. (2006) Conceptualizing and Measuring Cultures and Their Consequences: A Comparative Review of Globe's and Hofstede's Approaches. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 37(6), 897-914.

Jean, R.-J. B., Sinkovics, R. R., Kim, D. and Lew, Y. K. (2015) Drivers and Performance Implications of International Key Account Management Capability. *International Business Review*, 24(4), 543-555.

Jeffers, P. I., Muhanna, W. A. and Nault, B. R. (2008) Information Technology and Process Performance: An Empirical Investigation of the Interaction between It and Non-It Resources. *Decision Sciences*, 39(4), 703-735.

Jensen, P. E. (2005) A Contextual Theory of Learning and the Learning Organization. *Knowledge and Process Management*, 12(1), 53-64.

Jentsch, C., Schlosser, F. and Beimborn, D. (2015) Applying a Configurational Approach for Explaining the Role of Relationship Quality for Successful Outsourcing Arrangements. Springer-Verlag Berlin.

Johanson, J. and Vahlne, J.-E. (2009) The Uppsala Internationalization Process Model Revisited: From Liability of Foreignness to Liability of Outsidership. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 40(9), 1411-1431.

Johnson, J. P., Lenartowicz, T. and Apud, S. (2006) Cross-Cultural Competence in International Business: Toward a Definition and a Model. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 37(4), 525-543.

Jones, D. L. and McCleary, K. W. (2004) A Model for Assessing Cultural Impacts on International Buyer-Seller Relationships for Key Accounts of Hotel Companies. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 28(4), 425-443.

Jones, E., Dixon, A. L., Chonko, L. B. and Cannon, J. P. (2005) Key Accounts and Team Selling: A Review, Framework, and Research Agenda. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 25(2), 181-198.

Juttner, U. and Wehrli, H. P. (1994) Relationship Marketing from a Value System Perspective. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 5(5), 54-73.

Jyoti, J. and Kour, S. (2017) Factors Affecting Cultural Intelligence and Its Impact on Job Performance: Role of Cross-Cultural Adjustment, Experience and Perceived Social Support. *Personnel Review*, 46(4), 767-791.

Kalafatis, S. P. (2002) Buyer–Seller Relationships Along Channels of Distribution. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 31(3), 215-228.

Kapoor, D. R. and Saigal, P. (2013) *Research Methodology : Methods and Techniques*. Regal Publications.

Katsikeas, C. S., Skarmeas, D. and Bello, D. C. (2009) Developing Successful Trust-Based International Exchange Relationships. *Journal of international business studies*, 40(1), 132-155.

Kawsar, A. and Nor Azila Mohd, N. (2016) Key Account Management in Business-to-Business Relationship: Identifying Top K Persuaders Using Singular Value Decomposition. *Journal of Distribution Science*, 14(9), 15-24.

Keith, D. B. and Lance Eliot, B. (2001) Explaining the National Cultural Distance Paradox. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 32(1), 177.

Kempeners, M. A. and van der Hart, H. W. (1999) Designing Account Management Organizations. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 14(4), 310-335.

Kientop, D. (2009) Integrating Medical Science Liaisons into Key Account Management. *Journal of Medical Marketing*, 10(1), 45-51.

Kosmol, T., Reimann, F. and Kaufmann, L. (2018) Co-Alignment of Supplier Quality Management Practices and Cognitive Maps - a Neo-Configurational Perspective. *Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management*, 24(1), 1-20.

Kostova, T. and Roth, K. (2002) Adoption of an Organizational Practice by Subsidiaries of Multinational Corporations: Institutional and Relational Effects. *Academy of management journal*, 45(1), 215-233.

Kotrlik, J. and Higgins, C. (2001) Organizational Research: Determining Appropriate Sample Size in Survey Research Appropriate Sample Size in Survey Research. Information technology, learning, and performance journal, 19(1), 43.

Krejcie, R. V. and Morgan, D. W. (1970) Determining Sample Size for Research Activities. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 30(3), 607-610.

Kroeber, A. L. and Kluckhohn, C. (1952) Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions. Papers. Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology, Harvard University, 47(1), viii, 223-viii, 223.

Kurzrock, W. (1983) Key Account Sales: A High Payoff Training Challenge. Training and Development Journal, 37(11), 41.

Lacoste, S. (2016) Perspectives on Social Media Ant Its Use by Key Account Managers. Industrial Marketing Management, 54, 33.

Lai, C. J. and Gelb, B. D. (2015) Key Account Teams: Success Factors for Implementing Strategy. Journal of Business Strategy, 36(4), 48-55.

Laplaca, P. J. and Katrichis, J. M. (2009) Relative Presence of Business-to-Business Research in the Marketing Literature. Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing, 16(1-2), 1-22.

Lavrakas, P. J. (2008) Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods. SAGE.

Lee, J. N., Miranda, S. M. and Kim, Y. M. (2004) It Outsourcing Strategies: Universalistic, Contingency, and Configurational Explanations of Success. Information Systems Research, 15(2), 110-131.

Leischnig, A., Ivens, B., Niersbach, B. and Pardo, C. (2018) Mind the Gap: A Process Model for Diagnosing Barriers to Key Account Management Implementation. Industrial Marketing Management, 70, 58-67.

Leung, K. and Bond, M. H. (2004) Social Axioms: A Model for Social Beliefs in Multicultural Perspective. Elsevier Academic Press.

Lewis-Beck, M. S., Bryman, A. and Liao, T. F. (2004) The Sage Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods, Available online: <http://methods.sagepub.com/reference/the-sage-encyclopedia-of-social-science-research-methods> [Accessed 03/03/2020].

Lewis, R. D. (1996) When Cultures Collide : Leading across Cultures. NICHOLAS BREALEY PUB.

Lindgreen, A., Hingley, M. K., Grant, D. B. and Morgan, R. E. (2012) Value in Business and Industrial Marketing: Past, Present, and Future. Industrial Marketing Management, 41(1), 207-214.

LinkedIn (2019) *Own Analytics from LinkedIn Regarding Direct Comparison of Sales Roles and Functions*, 2019. Available online: [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) [Accessed].

Litwin, M. S. (1995) How to Measure Survey Reliability and Validity. Vol. 7. SAGE Publications, Incorporated.

Marcos-Cuevas, J., Nätti, S., Palo, T. and Ryals, L. (2014) Implementing Key Account Management: Intraorganizational Practices and Associated Dilemmas. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 43(7), 1216-1224.

Marshall, M. N. (1996) Sampling for Qualitative Research. *Family practice*, 13(6), 522-526.

Marsick, V. J. and Watkins, K. E. (2003) Demonstrating the Value of an Organization's Learning Culture: The Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire. *Advances in developing human resources*, 5(2), 132-151.

Martínez-López, F. J., Merigó, J. M., Gázquez-Abad, J. C. and Ruiz-Real, J. L. (2020) Industrial Marketing Management: Bibliometric Overview since Its Foundation. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 84, 19-38.

Matthews, L. C. and Thakkar, B. (2012) The Impact of Globalization on Cross-Cultural Communication. *InTech*.

Mayer, D. R. C. J. D. and Salovey, P. (2001) Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Leadership. *Psychology Press*.

McDonald, M., Millman, T. and Rogers, B. (1997) Key Account Management: Theory, Practice and Challenges. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 13(8), 737-757.

McGorry, S. Y. (2000) Measurement in a Cross-Cultural Environment: Survey Translation Issues. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 3(2), 74-81.

Meyer, A. D., Tsui, A. S. and Hinings, C. R. (1993a) Configurational Approaches to Organizational Analysis. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 36(6), 1175-1195.

Meyer, A. D., Tsui, A. S. and Hinings, C. R. (1993b) Configurational Approaches to Organizational Analysis. *Academy of Management Journal*, 36(6), 1175-1195.

Meyer, C. B. (2001) A Case in Case Study Methodology. *Field Methods*, 13(4), 329-352.

Millman, T. and Wilson, K. (1995) From Key Account Selling to Key Account Management. *Journal of Marketing Practice: Applied Marketing Science*, 1(1), 9-21.

Millman, T. and Wilson, K. (1996) Developing Key Account Management Competences. *Journal of Marketing Practice: Applied Marketing Science*, 2(2), 7-22.

Millman, T. and Wilson, K. (1999) Processual Issues in Key Account Management: Underpinning the Customer-Facing Organisation. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 14(4), 328-344.

Millman, T. F. (1996) Global Key Account Management and Systems Selling. *International Business Review*, 5(6), 631-645.

- Ming-Huei, H. and Wen-Chiung, C. (2011) Managing Key Account Portfolios across the Process of Relationship Development: A Value Proposition–Desired Value Alignment Perspective. *Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing*, 18(1), 83-119.
- Minkov, M. and Hofstede, G. (2011) *Cultural Differences in a Globalizing World*. Emerald.
- Minolta, K. (2009) *Konica Minolta Organisation Chart*, 2009. Available online: <https://www.slideshare.net/pkpb/org-chart-2421297> [Accessed].
- Montgomery, D. B. and Yip, G. S. (2000) The Challenge of Global Customer Management. *Marketing Management*, 9(4), 22.
- Moon, M. A. and Gupta, S. F. (1997) Examining the Formation of Selling Centers: A Conceptual Framework. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 17(2), 31-42.
- Morgan, R. and Hunt, S. (1994) The Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 58(3), 20.
- Morosini, P., Shane, S. and Singh, H. (1998) National Cultural Distance and Cross-Border Acquisition Performance. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 29(1), 137-158.
- Murphy, W. H. and Li, N. (2015) Key Account Management in China: Insights from a Chinese Supplier. *Journal of Business Research*, 68(6), 1234-1241.
- Myers, M. D. (2008) *Qualitative Research in Business & Management*. Sage.
- Nagy, G., Megehee, C. M., Woodsid, A. G., Laukkanen, T., Hirvonen, S. and Reijonen, H. (2017) Achieving Requisite Variety in Modeling Firms' Strategy Heterogeneities: Explaining Paradoxical Firm-Market Performances. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 65, 100-128.
- Nätti, S., Halinen, A. and Hanttu, N. (2006) Customer Knowledge Transfer and Key Account Management in Professional Service Organizations. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 17(4), 304-319.
- Nätti, S. and Palo, T. (2012) Key Account Management in Business-to-Business Expert Organisations: An Exploratory Study on the Implementation Process. *The Service Industries Journal*, 32(11), 1837-1852.
- Nätti, S., Rahkolin, S. and Saraniemi, S. (2014) Crisis Communication in Key Account Relationships. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 19(3), 234-246.
- Ng, C. H., Zhao, X. D. and Rungtusanatham, M. (2006) Coalignment between Environmental Uncertainty and Quality Management - a Configurational Perspective. *Asia Pacific Decision Sciences Inst.*
- Nickerson, C. (2005) English as a Lingua Franca in International Business Contexts. *English for Specific Purposes*, 24(4), 367-380.



- Noor, N. and Ahmad, K. (2014) Investigating the Relationship between Key Account Management Performance and Repeat Orders: Does the Length of the Relationship Matter? *Asian Academy of Management Journal*, 19(2), 23-42.
- Nordman, E. R. and Tolstoy, D. (2014) Does Relationship Psychic Distance Matter for the Learning Processes of Internationalizing Smes? *International Business Review*, 23(1), 30-37.
- Novikov, A. M. N. D. A. (2019) *Research Methodology: From Philosophy of Science to Research Design*. CRC Press.
- Nunan, D. (2003) The Impact of English as a Global Language on Educational Policies and Practices in the Asia-Pacific Region\*. *TESOL Quarterly*, 37(4), 589-613.
- O'Neal, C. R. (1989) Jit Procurement and Relationship Marketing. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 18(1), 55-63.
- Obadia, C. (2013) Foreignness-Induced Cognitive Disorientation. *Management International Review*, 53(3), 325-360.
- Ohmae, K. (1989). *The Global Logic of Strategic Alliances*, 143-154.
- Ojala, A. (2015) Geographic, Cultural, and Psychic Distance to Foreign Markets in the Context of Small and New Ventures. *International Business Review*, 24(5), 825-835.
- Ojasalo, J. (2001) Key Account Management at Company and Individual Levels in Business-to-Business Relationships. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 16(3), 199-220.
- Ojasalo, J. (2002) Key Account Management in Information-Intensive Services. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 9(5), 269-276.
- Ordeix-Rigo, E. and Duarte, J. (2009) From Public Diplomacy to Corporate Diplomacy: Increasing Corporation's Legitimacy and Influence. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 53(4), 549-564.
- Pardo, C. (1997) Key Account Management in the Business to Business Field: The Key Account's Point of View. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 17(4), 17-26.
- Pardo, C. (1999) Key Account Management in the Business-to-Business Field: A French Overview. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 14(4), 276-297.
- Pardo, C. (2001) Key Account Management in the Industrial Field. The Account Team for an Efficient Reconfiguration of the Supplier-Customer Relationship, *Proceedings of the 17th annual IMP conference, Oslo*.
- Pardo, C., Henneberg, S. C., Mouzas, S. and Naudè, P. (2006) Unpicking the Meaning of Value in Key Account Management. *European Journal of Marketing*, 40(11/12), 1360-1374.

- Pardo, C., Ivens, B. S. and Niersbach, B. (2020) An Identity Perspective of Key Account Managers as Paradoxical Relationship Managers. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 89, 355-372.
- Pardo, C., Missirilian, O., Portier, P. and Salle, R. (2011) Barriers to the “Key Supplierization” of the Firm. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 40(6), 853-861.
- Pardo, C., Salle, R. and Spencer, R. (1995) The Key Accountization of the Firm: A Case Study. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 24(2), 123-134.
- Pathak, V., Jena, B. and Kalra, S. (2013) Qualitative Research. *Perspectives in clinical research*, 4(3), 192-192.
- Patten, M. L. (2017) *Questionnaire Research : A Practical Guide*. Routledge.
- Pels, J. (1992) Identification and Management of Key Clients. *European Journal of Marketing*, 26(5), 5-21.
- Pereira, G., Tzempelikos, N., Trento Luiz, R., Trento Carlos, R., Borchardt, M. and Viegas Claudia, V. (2019) Top Managers’ Role in Key Account Management. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 34(5), 977-993.
- Peters, M. and Passchier, J. (2006) Translating Instruments for Cross-Cultural Studies in Headache Research. *Headache: The Journal of Head and Face Pain*, 46(1), 82-91.
- Pettigrew, A. M. (1990) Longitudinal Field Research on Change: Theory and Practice. *Organization Science*, 1(3), 267-292.
- Philippe Gosselin, D., Matthyssens, P. and André Bauwen, G. (2006) Strategic Account Management: Customer Value Creation through Customer Alignment. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 21(6), 376-385.
- Piercy, N. F. and Lane, N. (2006) The Hidden Risks in Strategic Account Management Strategy. *Journal of Business Strategy*, 27(1), 18-26.
- Piila, L. and Haapasalo, H. (2009) The Key Account Management System in the Paper Industry Business Environment. *International Journal of Business Excellence*, 2(3/4), 223.
- Pressey, A. D., Gilchrist, A. J. P. and Lenney, P. (2014) Sales and Marketing Resistance to Key Account Management Implementation: An Ethnographic Investigation. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 43(7), 1157-1171.
- Punch, K. F. and Oancea, A. E. (2014) *Introduction to Research Methods in Education*. SAGE Publications.
- Raimi, L. and Adebakin, M. (2013) Environmental Factors and Survey Research in Developing Countries: Evidence from Nigeria. *Asian Journal of Empirical Research Technology Management*, 3(10), 1362-1381.

Rand, I. (2015) Cultural Intelligence: The Essential Intelligence for the 21st Century.

Rapp, A., Beitelspacher, L. S., Schillewaert, N. and Baker, T. L. (2012) The Differing Effects of Technology on inside Vs. Outside Sales Forces to Facilitate Enhanced Customer Orientation and Interfunctional Coordination. *Journal of Business Research*, 65(7), 929-936.

Raymond, L. and Croteau, A. M. (2006) Enabling the Strategic Development of Smes through Advanced Manufacturing Systems - a Configurational Perspective. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 106(7), 1012-1032.

Rehme, J., Brashear Alejandro, T., Kowalkowski, C. and Nordigården, D. (2013) Sales Coordination and Structural Complexity: A National-International Comparison. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 28(6), 514-522.

Reisel, W. D., Chia, S.-L. and Maloles Iii, C. M. (2005) Job Insecurity Spillover to Key Account Management: Negative Effects on Performance, Effectiveness, Adaptiveness, and Esprit De Corps. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 19(4), 483-503.

Reynolds, N., Simintiras, A. and Vlachou, E. (2003) International Business Negotiations: Present Knowledge and Direction for Future Research. *International Marketing Review*, 20(3), 236-261.

Richards, K. A. and Jones, E. (2009) Key Account Management: Adding Elements of Account Fit to an Integrative Theoretical Framework. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 29(4), 305-320.

Richards, K. A. and Jones, E. (2013) Key Account Management: Adding Elements of Account Fit to an Integrative Theoretical Framework. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 29(4), 305-320.

Ryals, L. and Bruce, L. (2006) Key Account Management: Overcoming Internal Conflict. *Journal of Direct, Data and Digital Marketing Practice*, 7(4), 344-351.

Ryals, L. and Davies, I. A. (2013) Where's the Strategic Intent in Key Account Relationships? *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 28(2), 111-124.

Ryals, L. and Rogers, B. (2007) Key Account Planning: Benefits, Barriers and Best Practice. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 15(2), 209-222.

Salojärvi, H. and Saarenketo, S. (2013) The Effect of Teams on Customer Knowledge Processing, Esprit De Corps and Account Performance in International Key Account Management. *European Journal of Marketing*, 47(5/6), 987-1005.

Salojärvi, H., Sainio, L.-M. and Tarkiainen, A. (2010) Organizational Factors Enhancing Customer Knowledge Utilization in the Management of Key Account Relationships. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 39(8), 1395-1402.

Salojärvi, H. and Sainio, L. M. (2010) Customer Knowledge Processing and Key Account Performance. *European Business Review*, 22(3), 339-352.

Saner, R., Yiu, L. and Søndergaard, M. (2000) Business Diplomacy Management: A Core Competency for Global Companies. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 14(1), 80-92.

Sanford, D. M. and Maddox, L. (1999) Key Account Management – Advertising Agency Management of Domestic and International Accounts. *International Marketing Review*, 16(6), 504-517.

Santos, J. R. A. (1999) Cronbach's Alpha: A Tool for Assessing the Reliability of Scales. *Journal of extension*, 37(2), 1-5.

Saris, W. E. (2014) *Design, Evaluation, and Analysis of Questionnaires for Survey Research*. Wiley.

Sarmiento, M., Simões, C. and Farhangmehr, M. (2015) Applying a Relationship Marketing Perspective to B2b Trade Fairs: The Role of Socialization Episodes. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 44, 131-141.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2009) *Research Methods for Business Students*. Pearson Education.

Savage, C. W. (1990) *Scientific Theories*. University of Minnesota Press.

Schmitt, B. H. (2010) *Customer Experience Management: A Revolutionary Approach to Connecting with Your Customers*. John Wiley & Sons.

Schultz, R. J. and Evans, K. R. (2002) Strategic Collaborative Communication by Key Account Representatives. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 22(1), 23-31.

Schwartz, S. H. (1992) *Universals in the Content and Structure of Values: Theoretical Advances and Empirical Tests in 20 Countries*. Academic Press.

Schwartz, S. H. (1994) *Beyond Individualism/Collectivism: New Cultural Dimensions of Values*. Sage Publications, Inc.

Schwartz, S. H. and Bilsky, W. (1987) Toward a Universal Psychological Structure of Human Values. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 53(3), 550-562.

Sengupta, S., Krapfel, R. E. and Pusateri, M. A. (2000) An Empirical Investigation of Key Account Salesperson Effectiveness. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 20(4), 253-261.

Shapiro, J. M., Ozanne, J. L. and Saatcioglu, B. (2008) An Interpretive Examination of the Development of Cultural Sensitivity in International Business. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 39(1), 71-87.

Sharma, A. (1997) Who Prefers Key Account Management Programs? An Investigation of Business Buying Behavior and Buying Firm Characteristics. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 17(4), 27-39.

Sharma, A. (2006) Success Factors in Key Accounts. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 21(3), 141-150.

Sharma, A. and Evanschitzky, H. (2016) Returns on Key Accounts: Do the Results Justify the Expenditures? *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 31(2), 174-182.

Shenkar, O. (2001) Cultural Distance Revisited: Towards a More Rigorous Conceptualization and Measurement of Cultural Differences. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 32(3), 519-535.

Sheth, J. N. and Parvatiyar, A. (2002) Evolving Relationship Marketing into a Discipline. *Journal of Relationship Marketing*, 1(1), 3-16.

Sheth, J. N. and Sharma, A. (1997) Supplier Relationships: Emerging Issues and Challenges. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 26(2), 91-100.

Shi, L. H., White, J. C., Zou, S. and Cavusgil, S. T. (2010) Global Account Management Strategies: Drivers and Outcomes. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 41(4), 620-638.

Shi, X. and Wang, J. (2011) Interpreting Hofstede Model and Globe Model: Which Way to Go for Cross-Cultural Research? *International journal of business and management*, 6(5), 93.

Silberman, M. L. (2010) *The Handbook of Experiential Learning*. John Wiley & Sons.

Simintiras, A. C. and Thomas, A. H. (1998) Cross-Cultural Sales Negotiations: A Literature Review and Research Propositions. *International Marketing Review*, 15(1), 10-28.

Singh, A. S. and Masuku, M. B. (2014) Sampling Technique & Determination of Sample Size in Applied Statistics Research: An Overview. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*, 2(11).

Sizoo, S., Serrie, H. and Shapero, M. (2007) Revisiting a Theory-Supported Approach to Teaching Cross-Cultural Management Skills. *Journal of Teaching in International Business*, 18(2-3), 83-99.

Slater, S. F. and Narver, J. C. (1994) Market Orientation, Customer Value, and Superior Performance. *Business Horizons*, 37(2), 22-28.

Sleep, S., Dixon Andrea, L., DeCarlo, T. and Lam Son, K. (2020) The Business-to-Business inside Sales Force: Roles, Configurations and Research Agenda. *European Journal of Marketing*, 54(5), 1025-1060.

Smith, B. D. (2009) Myth, Reality and Requirements in Pharmaceutical Key Account Management. *Journal of Medical Marketing*, 9(2), 89-95.

Smith, M., Dowling, P. and Rose, E. (2011) Psychic Distance Revisited: A Proposed Conceptual Framework and Research Agenda.

Snieder, R. and Lerner, K. (2014) *The Art of Being a Scientist a Guide for Graduate Students and Their Mentors*. Cambridge University Press.

Solberg, C. A. (2008) Product Complexity and Cultural Distance Effects on Managing International Distributor Relationships: A Contingency Approach. *Journal of International Marketing*, 16(3), 57-83.

Song, J. H., Kim, J. Y. and Chermack, T. J. (2008) Cross Cultural Perspectives of the Learning Organization: Assessing the Validity and Reliability of the Dloq in Korea. Online Submission.

Sousa, C. M. and Bradley, F. (2006) Cultural Distance and Psychic Distance: Two Peas in a Pod? *Journal of International Marketing*, 14(1), 49-70.

Spaulding, D. T., Lodico, M. G. and Voegtle, K. H. (2013) *Methods in Educational Research : From Theory to Practice*. Jossey-Bass.

Speakman, J. I. F., Bettis-Outland, H. and Ryals, L. (2012) Key Account Management: The inside Selling Job. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 27(5), 360-369.

Spencer, R. (1999) Key Accounts: Effectively Managing Strategic Complexity. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 14(4), 291-310.

Storbacka, K. (2012) Strategic Account Management Programs: Alignment of Design Elements and Management Practices. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 27(4), 259-274.

Sullivan, U. Y., Peterson, R. M. and Krishnan, V. (2012) Value Creation and Firm Sales Performance: The Mediating Roles of Strategic Account Management and Relationship Perception. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 41(1), 166-173.

Sutherland, A., Edgar, D. and Duncan, P. (2015) International Infusion in Practice – from Cultural Awareness to Cultural Intelligence. *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice*, 3.

Tang, L. and Koveos, P. E. (2008) A Framework to Update Hofstede's Cultural Value Indices: Economic Dynamics and Institutional Stability. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 39(6), 1045-1063.

Tesser, L. (2018) 'FATHER OF MODERN MARKETING' PHILIP KOTLER ON AVOIDING BRAND DECAY AND PREPARING FOR DISRUPTION, *MARKETING WEEK*2018.

Thomas, D. C. (2006) Domain and Development of Cultural Intelligence: The Importance of Mindfulness. *Group & Organization Management*, 31(1), 78-99.

Thomas, D. C. (2008) *Cultural Intelligence: People Skills for Global Business*. ReadHowYouWant. com.

Thomas, D. C., Elron, E., Stahl, G., Ekelund, B. Z., Ravlin, E. C., Cerdin, J.-L., Poelmans, S., Brislin, R., Pekerti, A. and Aycan, Z. (2008) Cultural Intelligence: Domain and Assessment. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 8(2), 123-143.

Thompson, S. K. (2013) Sampling. Wiley.

Tice, T. (1997) Managing Compensation Caps in Key Accounts. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 17(4), 41-47.

Tihanyi, L., Griffith, D. A. and Russell, C. J. (2005) The Effect of Cultural Distance on Entry Mode Choice, International Diversification, and Mne Performance: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 36(3), 270-283.

Triandis, H. C. (2006) Cultural Intelligence in Organizations. *Group & Organization Management*, 31(1), 20-26.

Trompenaars, F. (1993) *Riding the Waves of Culture : Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business*. Economist Books.

Tyupa, S. (2011) A Theoretical Framework for Back-Translation as a Quality Assessment Tool. *New Voices in Translation Studies*(7), 35-46.

Tzempelikos, N. (2015) Top Management Commitment and Involvement and Their Link to Key Account Management Effectiveness. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 30(1), 32-44.

Tzempelikos, N. and Gounaris, S. (2013) Approaching Key Account Management from a Long-Term Perspective. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 21(2), 179-198.

Tzempelikos, N. and Gounaris, S. (2015) Linking Key Account Management Practices to Performance Outcomes. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 45, 22.

Ursachi, G., Horodnic, I. A. and Zait, A. (2015) How Reliable Are Measurement Scales? External Factors with Indirect Influence on Reliability Estimators. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 20, 679-686.

Vanharanta, M., Gilchrist, A. J. P., Pressey, A. D. and Lenney, P. (2014) The Reflexive Turn in Key Account Management: Beyond Formal and Post-Bureaucratic Prescriptions.(Report). *European Journal of Marketing*, 48(11-12).

Venaik, S. and Brewer, P. (2008a) Contradictions in National Culture: Hofstede Vs Globe, *Academy of International Business 2008 Annual Meeting, Milan, Italy*.

Venaik, S. and Brewer, P. (2008b) *Contradictions in National Culture: Hofstede Vs Globe* Australia: International Human Resource Management, Cross-cultural Management, and Qualitative Research Methods School, U. B., Queensland, U. o., 4072, S. L., Queensland & Australia.

Venaik, S. and Brewer, P. (2010) Avoiding Uncertainty in Hofstede and Globe. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 41(8), 1294-1315.

Verbeke, W., Bagozzi, R. P. and Farris, P. (2006) The Role of Key Account Programs, Trust, and Brand Strength on Resource Allocation in the Channel of Distribution. *European Journal of Marketing*, 40(5/6), 502-532.

Verhoef, P. C., Lemon, K. N., Parasuraman, A., Roggeveen, A., Tsiros, M. and Schlesinger, L. A. (2009) Customer Experience Creation: Determinants, Dynamics and Management Strategies. *Journal of Retailing*, 85(1), 31-41.

von Nordenflycht, A. (2010) What Is a Professional Service Firm? Toward a Theory and Taxonomy of Knowledge-Intensive Firms. *The Academy of Management Review*, 35(1), 155-174.

Walter, A., Ritter, T. and Gemünden, H. G. (2001) Value Creation in Buyer–Seller Relationships: Theoretical Considerations and Empirical Results from a Supplier's Perspective. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 30(4), 365-377.

Wang, Y. C., Kung, L., Gupta, S. and Ozdemir, S. (2019) Leveraging Big Data Analytics to Improve Quality of Care in Healthcare Organizations: A Configurational Perspective. *British Journal of Management*, 30(2), 362-388.

Waterman, R. H., Peters, T. J. and Phillips, J. R. (1980) Structure Is Not Organization. *Business Horizons*, 23(3), 14-26.

Wehrli, H. P. and Jüttner, U. (1996) Beziehungsmarketing in Wertsystemen. *Marketing: Zeitschrift für Forschung und Praxis*, 18(1), 33-43.

Weilbaker, D. C. and Weeks, W. A. (1997) The Evolution of National Account Management: A Literature Perspective. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 17(4), 49-59.

Weisberg, H. F., Bowen, B. D. and Krosnick, J. A. (1999) *An Introduction to Survey Research, Polling, and Data Analysis*. SAGE.

Wengler, S. (2007) The Appropriateness of the Key Account Management Organization. *Journal of business market management*, 1(3), 253.

Widmer, E. D., Giudici, F., Le Goff, J. M. and Pollien, A. (2009) From Support to Control: A Configurational Perspective on Conjugal Quality. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 71(3), 437-448.

Wießmeier, G., Thoma, A. and Senn, C. (2012) Leveraging Synergies between R&D and Key Account Management to Drive Value Creation. *Research Technology Management*, 55(3), 15-22.

Williams, J. D., Han, S.-L. and Qualls, W. J. (1998) A Conceptual Model and Study of Cross-Cultural Business Relationships. *Journal of Business Research*, 42(2), 135-143.

Wilson, K. and Weilbaker, D. (2004) Global Account Management: A Literature Based Conceptual Model. *American Journal of Business*, 19(1), 15-22.

Wilson, K. and Woodburn, D. (2014) The Impact of Organisational Context on the Failure of Key and Strategic Account Management Programmes. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 29(5), 353-363.



Winston, R. (1977) Company Profile Questionnaire: One Aspect of Managing People in Use at Unigate. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 9(6), 230-235.

Wisker, G. (2008) *The Postgraduate Research Handbook*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Wong, H. F., Thoo, A. C., Muharam, F. M. and Sulaiman, Z. (2016) The Mediation Role of Key Account Management Effectiveness on Key Account Management Practices and Market Performance. *Social Sciences (Pakistan)*, 11(21), 5260-5264.

Wong, Y. H. (1998) Key to Key Account Management: Relationship (Guanxi) Model. *International Marketing Review*, 15(3), 215-231.

Workman, J. P., Homburg, C. and Jensen, O. (2003) Intraorganizational Determinants of Key Account Management Effectiveness. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 31(1), 3-21.

Xiao, H. and Boyd, D. (2010) Learning from Cross-Cultural Problems in International Projects: A Chinese Case. *Engineering, Construction and Architectural Management*.

Yang, C. I., Lee, L. H. and Tzeng, W. C. (2008) The Relationship between Qualitative Research and Positivism. *Hu Li Za Zhi*, 55(5), 64-8.

Yeh, J. H., Wang, S. W., Hsu, M. K. and Swanson, S. (2017) Key Account Relationship Management: The Moderating Effects of Relationship Duration and Transaction Volume. *The Service Industries Journal*, 38(7-8), 379-401.

Yusof, N. J. M. (2018) *Human-Focused Quality Management (Hfqm) Framework Towards Performance Excellence for Malaysian Ready-to-Wear Garment Industry*. PhD Manchester Metropolitan University.

Yvonne Feilzer, M. (2010) Doing Mixed Methods Research Pragmatically: Implications for the Rediscovery of Pragmatism as a Research Paradigm. *Journal of mixed methods research*, 4(1), 6-16.

Zain Ul, A., Latif, A. and Nazar, M. S. (2012) Key Account Management Practices in Fmcg Industry of Pakistan. *International Journal of Knowledge, Culture and Change Management*, 11(4), 339-363.

Zhang, J. (2014) The Psychic Distance of the Enterprise Internationalization, *WHICEB*.

Zupancic, D. (2008) Towards an Integrated Framework of Key Account Management. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 23(5), 323-331.

Zupancic, D. and Müllner, M. (2008) International Key Account Management in Manufacturing Companies: An Exploratory Approach of Situative Differentiation. *Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing*, 15(4), 455-475.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Details about questions in the questionnaire

	<b>Demographics of the respondents</b> Multiple-choice questions	<b>Short description</b>
1	Where are you born?	Original region of origin
2	Which languages do you speak fluently	Willingness to adapt to other regions
3	What is your culture-religious background?	Present region of origin
4	Have you ever lived in a different cultural region for more than three years?	Willingness to live abroad
5	What is your highest academic degree?	Level of education
6	How many years of sales experiences do you have?	Level of professional experiences
7	Which of the following sales positions describes most widely your current job role?	Level of professional responsibilities
8	Which geographical term describes most widely your current role function?	Level of international skills
9	What percent of your monthly communication to customers, business partner etc. at work is international?	Level of international obligations
10	What is your monthly usage frequency (in %) regarding these tools for communication to customers, clients, and business partners?	Preferred communication tool
	<b>Cultural and social profile</b> Likert-Ranking (1 strongly agree – 5 strongly disagree)	<b>Short description</b>
11	In my society, societal requirements and instructions are spelt out in detail, so citizens know what they are expected to do.	Uncertainty avoidance
12	In my society, rules or laws cover almost all situations	Uncertainty avoidance
13	In my society, rank and position in the hierarchy have special privileges.	Power distance
14	In my society, being accepted by the other members of a group is very important.	In-group collectivism
15	In my society, it is improper to express feelings in public	Human orientation
16	My society, people embark on common goals without being so concerned with what is Good and what is Bad	Institutional collectivism
17	My society, the most effective way to change a political system is through public debates and free elections	Assertiveness
18	In my society, more people live for the present than live for the future	Future orientation
19	In my society, major rewards are based on only performance effectiveness	Performance orientation
	<b>Organisational profile</b> Multiple-choice questions	<b>Short description</b>
20	Where is your company based (country)?	Type of cultural region
21	My company is mainly A) producing/manufacturing goods. B) offering/providing services. C) distributing/reselling goods.	Type of business
22	What are the top business sectors of your company?	Area of business
23	Where is your company geographically working?	Level of internationality
24	Which languages (spoken and written) are common in your company for the communication with employees, customers, clients and business partners?	Level of internationality
25	How many people are working for your company?	Size and complexity of the company
26	Does your company have restrictions to contact, communicate, and work with other cultural regions?	Level of cross-cultural limitations and freedom
	<b>Organisational culture</b> Likert-Ranking (1 strongly agree – 5 strongly disagree)	<b>Short description</b>
27	In my organization, meetings are usually: <i>planned well in advance</i> ----- <i>spontaneous</i>	Future orientation
28	In my organization, a person's influence is based primarily on: <i>one's ability and contribution to the organization</i> ----- <i>the authority of one's position</i>	Power distance

29	In my organization: <i>teamwork is more valued than individualism ----- individualism is more valued than group cohesion</i>	In-group collectivism
30	In my organization, job requirements and instructions are spelt out in detail, so employees know what they are expected to do.	Uncertainty avoidance
31	In my organization, employees are encouraged to strive for continuously improved performance.	Performance orientation
	<b>Key account management</b> Likert-Ranking (1 strongly agree – 5 strongly disagree); Multi-choice questions	<b>Short description</b>
32	Does your company have high-potential accounts with complex needs requiring long-term and established relationships?	Level of key account management recognition
33	Does your company may treat/ view a customer as a key account but doesn't have formally define them as such?	Level of key account management consideration
34	In my company, <i>key accounts management (KAM) is: Implemented (KAM acts a task or process) ----- Institutionalized (KAM is fully integrated into the organisation through-out all departments)</i>	Level of key account management execution
35	Key accounts will be managed: A) <i>directly through a dedicated key account-specific sales team directly through a dedicated key account manager C) through the general salesforce (inside sales, national sales, account sales)</i>	Level of key account management sales support
36	The following departments in my company are fully aware and adequate prepared for the specific needs and requirements of key accounts. <i>Supply Chain, Logistics, Finance, Customer Service, IT, Human Resources, Production/Manufacturing, Research &amp; Development Marketing, Commercial Operation, Top Management, Business Intelligence</i>	Level of organisational support for key account management
	<b>Cross-cultural customer relationship</b> Likert-Ranking (1 strongly agree – 5 strongly disagree)	<b>Short description</b>
37	My company is putting efforts in the awareness and knowledge of cultural differences to their key customers, clients, and business partners	Level of awareness
38	My company is facing difficulties in establishing KAM relationship due to cross-cultural differences	Level of awareness
39	My company is considering cultural differences to their key customers, clients, and business partners as an important factor for success.	Level of consideration
40	My company is considering cross-cultural skills for the hiring of sales forces	Level of consideration
41	My company is providing principles, guidelines and set of values to work cross-culturally.	Level of execution
42	My company is including cross-cultural characteristics into the account profiles, like language preferences, religious holidays, specific norms of behavioural codes, etc	Level of execution
43	My company is providing opportunities for key account management training, e.g. time management, customer relationship, business strategy etc	Level of the learning organisation
44	My company is providing opportunities for culture-specific training, e.g. language learning, cultural insights, working abroad etc	Level of the learning organisation
45	In my company, aspects of the cross-cultural diversity of key accounts will be considered in the planning and execution of tasks in the following departments: <i>Supply Chain, Logistics, Finance, Customer Service, IT, Human Resources, Production/Manufacturing, Research &amp; Development Marketing, Commercial Operation, Top Management, Business Intelligence</i>	Level of organisational support for cross-cultural key account management
	<b>Cross-cultural skills for key account managers</b> Likert-Ranking (1 strongly agree – 5 strongly disagree)	<b>Short description</b>

46	<p>Please rank these job qualifications for key account managers: <i>Open-mindedly to different ideas and values. Developing an awareness of other cultures. Being aware of the dangers of stereotyping. Comfortable working with people from different cultures. Significant experience in and enjoyment of intensive cross-cultural environments. Broad background and knowledge of world affairs and cultures. Ability to cope with constant change. Ability to relate to and interact with people of different personalities and backgrounds. Ability to notice details that others might normally miss. Sensitive to economic considerations and human needs. Diplomatic skills and sensitivity to different management styles. Sensitivity and awareness of how one's actions may affect others. Good listening, clarifying, questioning and responding skills. High degree of physical stamina; Excellent and robust health. Adept in new environments and at understanding the motivations of others.</i></p>	Scope of a preferable skill set for key account managers
----	---	--

## Appendix 2 – Cover letter and questionnaire in English

Dear participants

I am inviting you to participate in this global research study titled “Impact of socio-economic, cultural, and religious factors on the implementation and practice of key account management”.

This study is being conducted by Dr Nektarios Tzempelikos and Dr Christian Lautenschläger from the Department of Faculty of Business and Law, School of Management at Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, United Kingdom.

In this study, you will be asked to complete an electronic survey. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw your participation from this study at any time. The survey should take only 10 minutes to complete. There is no compensation for responding, nor is there any known risk. This survey has been approved by the Faculty Research Ethics Panel Chair of Anglia Ruskin University.

If you choose to participate in this project, please answer all questions as honestly as possible and submit the completed questionnaires promptly. If you require additional information or have questions, please contact us directly. Our thanks in advance for your help, and we assure you that all answers are strictly confidential and will be used exclusively for academic purposes. Please click on the survey link below and provide us with your feedback no later than September 30, 2019: <https://www.kam-global-study.com/>

Yours faithfully.

**Dr Christian Lautenschläger**  
christian.lautenschlager@pgr.anglia.ac.uk

**Dr Nektarios Tzempelikos**  
nektarios.tzempelikos@anglia.ac.uk

### **QUESTIONNAIRE**

#### **Impact of socio-economic, cultural, and religious factors on the implementation and practice of key account management**

Dear participants

I am inviting you to participate in this global research study titled “Impact of socio-economic, cultural, and religious factors on the implementation and practice of key account management”.

This study is being conducted by Dr Nektarios Tzempelikos and Dr Christian Lautenschläger from the Department of Faculty of Business and Law, School of Management at Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, United Kingdom.

In this study, you will be asked to complete an electronic survey. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw your participation from this study at any time. The survey should take only 10 minutes to complete. There is no compensation for responding, nor is there any known risk. This survey has been approved by the Faculty Research Ethics Panel Chair of Anglia Ruskin University.

If you choose to participate in this project, please answer all questions as honestly as possible and submit the completed questionnaires promptly.

If you require additional information or have questions, please contact us directly via [christian.lautenschlager@pgr.anglia.ac.uk](mailto:christian.lautenschlager@pgr.anglia.ac.uk) or [nektarios.tzempelikos@anglia.ac.uk](mailto:nektarios.tzempelikos@anglia.ac.uk).

Our thanks in advance for your help and we assure you that all answers are strictly confidential and will be used exclusively for academic purposes.

Please click on the survey link below and provide us with your feedback no later than September 01, 2019.

Yours faithfully.

Dr Christian Lautenschlager

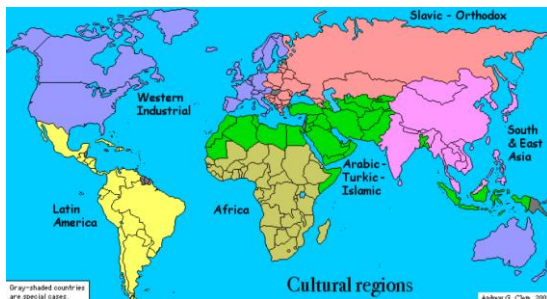
Dr Nektarios Tzempelikos

## About you

1. Where are you born? Please select.

2. Which languages do you speak fluently? Tick all that apply.

3. What is your culture-religious background? Please select.



- ☐ South-East Asia
- ☐ Latin America
- ☐ Slavic-Orthodox
- ☐ Arabic Turkic-Islamic
- ☐ Western Industrial
- ☐ Africa
- ☐ Jewish

4. Have you ever lived in a different cultural region for more than three years? Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

5. What is your highest academic degree? Mark only one oval.

- ☐ High school degree
- ☐ Bachelor (University)
- ☐ Master/Diploma (University)
- ☐ Doctor (University)

6. How many years of sales experiences do you have?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 1-3
- ☐ 4-6
- ☐ 7-10
- ☐ 11-13
- ☐ 15-20
- ☐ more than 21
- ☐

7. Which of the following sales positions describes most widely your current job role? Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Inside sales
- ☐ National sales
- ☐ Account sales
- ☐ Key Account sales
- ☐ General manager
- ☐ President/Director of sales
- ☐ CEO/Founder
- ☐ Others

8. Which geographical term describes most widely your current role function? Mark only one oval.

- ☐ organisational (operating on specific valuable accounts/customers only)
- ☐ locally (operating in a specific geographic area of a country)
- ☐ national (operating for one country only)
- ☐ regional (operating in more than one country)
- ☐ international (operating between two continents)
- ☐ globally (operating in more than two continents)

9. What percent of your monthly communication to customers, business partner etc. at work is international? Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 1-10%
- ☐ 11-30%
- ☐ 31-50%
- ☐ 51-70%
- ☐ 71-100%
- ☐

10. What is your monthly usage frequency (in %) regarding these tools for communication to customers, clients, and business partners? Mark only one oval per row.

	0-20%	21-40%	41-60%	61-80%	81-100%
Emails					
Phone calls					
Instant Messengers (such as WeChat, WhatsApp, etc.)					
Personal visits					
Telefax					
Social media (such as LinkedIn, Facebook etc.)					
Blogs (such as TechCrunch)					

## About your culture and society

**In my society,**

*Mark only one oval per row.*

		1 (strongly agree)	2	3	4	5 (strongly disagree)
11	societal requirements and instructions are spelt out in detail so citizens know what they are expected to do.					
12	rules or laws cover almost all situations					
13	rank and position in the hierarchy have special privileges.					
14	being accepted by the other members of a group is very important.					
15	it is improper to express feelings in public					
16	people embark on common goals without being so concerned with what is Good and what is Bad					
17	the most effective way to change a political system is through public debates and free elections					
18	more people live for the present than live for the future					
19	major rewards are based on only performance effectiveness					

## About your organisation

**20. Where is your company based (country)?** *Please select.*

**21. My company is mainly ...** *Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ producing/manufacturing goods.
- ☐ offering/providing services.
- ☐ distributing/reselling goods.

**22. What are the top business sectors of your company?**

*Tick all that apply.*

- ☐ Government
- ☐ Telecommunication
- ☐ Legal services
- ☐ Construction
- ☐ Food processing
- ☐ Consulting
- ☐ Gambling
- ☐ Retail sales
- ☐ Franchising
- ☐ Real estate
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Pharmaceuticals
- ☐ Hospitality/Tourism
- ☐ Mass media
- ☐ Healthcare/hospitals
- ☐ Public health
- ☐ Information technology
- ☐ Waste disposal
- ☐ Banking
- ☐ Insurance
- ☐ Financial services
- ☐ FMCG
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**23. Where is your company geographically working?**

*Tick all that apply.*

- ☐ locally (operating in a specific geographic area of a country)
- ☐ national (operating in one country only)
- ☐ regional (operating in more than one country)
- ☐ international (operating between two continents)
- ☐ globally (operating in more than two continents)

**24. Which languages (spoken and written) are common in your company for the communication with employees, customers, clients and business partners?** *Tick all that apply.*

**25. How many people are working for your company?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ 1-10
- ☐ 11-20
- ☐ 21-30
- ☐ 31-40
- ☐ 41-50
- ☐ 51-80
- ☐ 81-100
- ☐ 101-200
- ☐ 201-300
- ☐ more than 300

**26. Does your company has restrictions to contact, communicate, and work with other cultural regions?**

*Tick all that apply.*

- ☐ No, we don't have any restrictions or limitations.
- ☐ Yes, we do have governmental restrictions, like sanctions and embargo.
- ☐ Yes, we do have corporate restrictions.
- ☐ Yes, I do have personal concerns.

## About your organisational culture

27. In my organization, meetings are usually: *Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
planned well in advance (2 or more weeks in advance)						spontaneous (planned less than an hour in advance)

28. In my organization, a person's influence is based primarily on:

*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
one's ability and contribution to the organization						the authority of one's position

## About key account management

32. Does your company has high-potential accounts with complex needs requiring long-term and established relationships?

*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly agree						strongly disagree

33. Does your company may treat/ view a customer as a key account but doesn't have formally define them as such?

*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly agree						strongly disagree

34. In my company, key accounts management (KAM) is ... *Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Implemented (KAM acts a task or process)						Institutionalized (KAM is fully integrated into the organisation through-out all departments)

## About cross-cultural customer relationship

		1 (strongly agree)	2	3	4	5 (strongly disagree)
37	putting efforts in the awareness and knowledge of cultural differences to their key customers, clients, and business partners.					
38	considering cultural differences to their key customers, clients, and business partners as an important factor for success.					
39	providing principles, guidelines and set of values to work cross-culturally.					
40	includes cross-cultural characteristics into the account profiles, like language preferences, religious holidays, specific norms of behavioural codes, etc.					
41	facing difficulties in establishing KAM relationship due to cross-cultural differences					
42	is considering cross-cultural skills for the hiring of sales forces.					

29. In my organization: *Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
teamwork is more valued than individualism						individualism is more valued than group cohesion

30. In my organization, job requirements and instructions are spelt out in detail, so employees know what they are expected to do. *Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly agree						strongly disagree

31. In my organization, employees are encouraged to strive for continuously improved performance. *Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly agree						strongly disagree

35. Key accounts will be managed .... *Tick all that apply.*

- ☐ directly through a dedicated key account-specific sales team
- ☐ directly through a dedicated key account manager
- ☐ through the general salesforce (inside sales, national sales, account sales)

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

36. Departments in my company are fully aware and adequate prepared for the specific needs and requirements of key accounts. *Mark only one oval per row.*

	1 (strongly agree)	2	3	4	5 (strongly disagree)
Supply Chain					
Logistics					
Finance					
Customer Service					
IT					
Human Resources					
Production/Manufacturing					
Research & Development					
Marketing					
Commercial Operation					
Top Management					
Business Intelligence					



43	providing opportunities for key account management training, e.g. time management, customer relationship, business strategy etc.					
44	providing opportunities for culture-specific training, e.g. language learning, cultural insights, working abroad etc.					

45. In my company, aspects of the cross-cultural diversity of key accounts will be considered in the planning and execution of tasks in ... *Mark only one oval per row.*

	1 (strongly agree)	2	3	4	5 (strongly disagree)
Supply Chain					
Logistics					
Finance					
Customer Service					
IT					
Human Resources					
Production/Manufacturing					
Research & Development					
Marketing					
Commercial Operation					
Top Management					
Business Intelligence					

### About cross-cultural skills for key account managers

46. Please rank these job qualification for key account managers. *Mark only one oval per row.*

	1 (very important)	2	3	4	5 (unimportant)
Open-mindedly to different ideas and values.					
Developing an awareness of other cultures					
Being aware of the dangers of stereotyping					
Comfortable working with people from different cultures					
Significant experience in and enjoyment of intensive cross-cultural environments					
Broad background and knowledge of world affairs and cultures					
Ability to cope with constant change					
Ability to relate to and interact with people of differing personalities and backgrounds					
Ability to notice details that Others might normally miss					
Sensitive to economic considerations and human needs					
Diplomatic skills and sensitivity to different management styles					
Sensitivity and awareness of how one's actions may affect others					
Good listening, clarifying, questioning and responding skills					
High degree of physical stamina; excellent and robust health					
Adept in new environments and at understanding the motivations of others					

### Keep in touch.

We will gladly send you a summary of the results of this survey if you leave your name and email address in the boxes provided at the end of the survey.

We will not use your email address for any marketing purposes, and we will not share these details with other parties.

Otherwise, please leave the fields blank.

Thanks for your participation.

## Appendix 3 – Cover letter and questionnaire in Spanish

### **Impacto de los factores socioeconómicos, culturales y religiosos en la**

### **Implementación y práctica de la gestión de cuentas clave.**

Estimados participantes

Les invito a participar en este estudio de investigación global titulado "Impacto socioeconómico, cultural y Factores religiosos en la implementación y práctica de la gestión de cuentas clave".

Este estudio está siendo llevado a cabo por el Dr. Nektarios Tzempelikos y el Dr. Christian Lautenschläger del Departamento de la Facultad de Negocios y Derecho, Escuela de Administración de la Universidad Anglia Ruskin, Cambridge, Reino Unido.

En este estudio, se le pedirá que complete una encuesta electrónica. Su participación en este estudio es voluntaria, y usted es libre de retirar su participación en cualquier momento. Para completar la encuesta, necesitará sólo 10 minutos.

No hay compensación por responder ni hay riesgo conocido. Esta encuesta está aprobada por el Presidente del Panel de Ética de Investigación de la Facultad de la Universidad Anglia Ruskin.

Si elige participar en este proyecto, responda a todas las preguntas de la manera más honesta posible y envíe los cuestionarios completados lo más antes posible.

Si necesita información adicional o tiene preguntas, contáctenos directamente a través de christian.lautenschlager@pgr.anglia.ac.uk o nektarios.tzempelikos@anglia.ac.uk.

Agradecemos de antemano su ayuda y le aseguramos que todas las respuestas son estrictamente confidenciales y serán utilizadas exclusivamente para fines académicos.

Haga clic en el enlace de la encuesta a continuación y envíenos sus comentarios no más tarde del 1 de septiembre de 2019.

Atentamente.

Dr Christian Lautenschläger

Dr Nektarios Tzempelikos

## Acerca de usted

¿Dónde ha nacido? Por favor seleccione

¿Qué idiomas habla con fluidez? Marque todas las opciones que correspondan.

¿Cuál es su origen cultural-religioso? Por favor seleccione



- ☐ Asia sudoriental
- ☐ América Latina
- ☐ Eslavo-ortodoxo
- ☐ Turco-islámico
- ☐ Occidente industrializado
- ☐ África
- ☐ Judio

¿Qué término geográfico describe más ampliamente su rol funcional actual? Marque solo una opción.

- ☐ Organizacional (operando en cuentas valiosas específicas / solo clientes)
- ☐ Localmente (operando en un área geográfica específica de un país)
- ☐ Nacional (operando solo por un país)
- ☐ Regional (operando en más de un país)
- ☐ Internacional (operando entre dos continentes)
- ☐ A nivel mundial (operando en más de dos continentes)

¿En el arco de un mes qué porcentaje de tiempo dedica en conversaciones internacionales con clientes, socios comerciales, etc.? Marque solo una opción.

- ☐ 1-10%
- ☐ 11-30%
- ☐ 31-50%
- ☐ 51-70%
- ☐ 71-100%

¿Alguna vez ha vivido en una diferente región cultural por más de tres años? Marque solo una opción.

- ☐ Si
- ☐ No

¿Cuál es su grado académico más alto? Marque solo una opción.

- ☐ Título de secundaria
- ☐ Licenciatura (Universidad)
- ☐ Master / Diploma (Universidad)
- ☐ Doctorado (Universidad)

¿Cuántos años de experiencia tiene en ventas? Marque solamente una opción.

- ☐ 1-3
- ☐ 4-6
- ☐ 7-10
- ☐ 11-13
- ☐ 15-20
- ☐ Más de 21

¿Cuál de las siguientes posiciones de ventas describe más ampliamente su actual función laboral? Marque solo una opción.

- ☐ Inside sales
- ☐ National sales
- ☐ Account sales
- ☐ Key Account sales
- ☐ General manager
- ☐ President/Director of sales
- ☐ CEO/ Fundador
- ☐ Otros

¿Cuál es su frecuencia de uso mensual (en%) con respecto a la siguientes herramientas usadas en la comunicación con compradores, clientes y socios comerciales? Marque solamente una opción.

	0-20%	21-40%	41-60%	61-80%	81-100%
Emails					
Llamadas telefónicas					
Mensajes Instantáneos (eg. WeChat, WhatsApp, etc.)					
Visitas personales					
Telefax					
Medios de comunicación social (eg. LinkedIn, Facebook, twitter etc.)					
Blogs (eg. TechCrunch)					

## Sobre su cultura y sociedad.

En mi sociedad

Marque sólo un opción por fila..

	1 (Totalmente de acuerdo)	2	3	4	5 (Totalmente desacuerdo)
Los requisitos sociales y las normas son claras y detalladas para que los ciudadanos sepan lo que se espera que hagan.					
Rango y posición en la jerarquía involucran privilegios especiales.					
Ser aceptado por otros miembros de un grupo es muy importante.					
Es impropio expresar sentimientos en público					

La gente se embarca en metas comunes sin estar tan preocupado por lo que es bueno y lo que es malo					
La forma más efectiva de cambiar el sistema político es a través del debates públicos y elecciones libres					
Más gente vive para el presente que por el futuro					
Reglas o leyes cubren casi todas las situaciones					
Las principales recompensas se basan solamente sobre la efectividad de rendimiento					

**¿Donde se encuentra su empresa (país)?** Por favor seleccione.

**Mi compañía se encuentra principalmente en...** Marque solo una opción.

- ☐ Producción / fabricación bienes.  
☐ Ofreciendo / prestando servicios.  
☐ Distribución / reventa de bienes.

**¿Cuáles son los principales sectores de negocios de su empresa?** Marque todas las opciones que correspondan.

- ☐ Gobierno  
☐ Telecomunicaciones  
☐ Servicios legales  
☐ Construcción  
☐ Procesamiento de alimentos.  
☐ Consultoría  
☐ Juego  
☐ Venta al detalle  
☐ Franquicias  
☐ Inmobiliaria  
☐ Educación  
☐ Productos farmacéuticos  
☐ Hospitalidad / Turismo  
☐ Medios de comunicación  
☐ Salud / Hospitales  
☐ Salud publica  
☐ Tecnología de la información  
☐ Eliminación de residuos  
☐ Banca  
☐ Seguro  
☐ Servicios financieros  
☐ FMCG  
☐ Otro : \_\_\_\_\_

**¿Dónde está geográficamente su empresa trabajando?** Marque todas las opciones que correspondan.

- ☐ Localmente (operando en un área geográfica específica de un país)  
☐ Nacional (operando en un solo país)  
☐ Regional (operando en más de un país)  
☐ Internacional (operando entre dos continentes)  
☐ Globalmente (operando en más de dos continentes)

**¿Qué idiomas (hablados y escritos) son comunes en su empresa para la comunicación con empleados, consumidores, clientes y socios comerciales?** Marque todas las opciones que correspondan.

**¿Cuántas personas están trabajando para su empresa?** Marque solo una opción.

- ☐ 1-10  
☐ 11-20  
☐ 21-30

**En mi organización, las reuniones suelen ser:** Marque solo una opción.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Planeado con mucha antelación (2 o más semanas de antelación)						Espontáneo (planeado con menos de una hora de anticipación)

**En mi organización, se alienta a los empleados a esforzarse por mejorar el rendimiento continuamente.** Marque solo una opción.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Totalmente de acuerdo						Muy en desacuerdo

**En mi organización, la influencia de una persona se basa principalmente en:** Marque solo una opción.

	1	2	3	4	5	
La individual capacidad y contribución a la organización.						La autoridad de una sola posición

**En mi organización, los requisitos del trabajo y las instrucciones se explican en los detalles para que los empleados sepan qué se espera que hagan.** Marque solo una opción.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Totalmente de acuerdo						Muy en desacuerdo

**En mi organización:** Marque solo una opción.

	1	2	3	4	5	
El trabajo en equipo es más valorado que el individualismo.						El individualismo es más valorado que la cohesión de grupo.

**¿Gestiona su empresa cuentas de alto potencial, con necesidades complejas, requiriendo relaciones establecidas a largo plazo?** Marque solo una opción.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Totalmente de acuerdo						Muy en desacuerdo

**¿Su empresa puede tratar / ver a un cliente como una cuenta clave pero sin definirlo formalmente como tal?** Marque solo una opción.

- ☐ 31-40
- ☐ 41-50
- ☐ 51-80
- ☐ 81-100
- ☐ 101-200
- ☐ 201-300
- ☐ more than 300

**¿Su empresa tiene restricciones para contactar, comunicar y trabajar con otras regiones culturales?** Marque todas las opciones que correspondan.

- ☐ No, no tenemos restricciones o limitaciones.
- ☐ Si, tenemos restricciones gubernamentales, tales como sanciones y embargos.
- ☐ Si, tenemos restricciones corporales.
- ☐ Si, problemas personales.

**La forma de tener éxito en mi empresa es: \***

Marque solo una opción.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Planificar por adelantado						Reaccionar a los eventos conforme ocurren

	1	2	3	4	5	
Totalmente de acuerdo						Muy en desacuerdo

**Las cuentas clave serán administradas ...** Marque todas las opciones que correspondan.

- ☐ Directamente a través de un equipo de ventas específico, dedicado a cuentas claves
- ☐ Directamente a través de un key account manager
- ☐ A través de la fuerza de ventas general (inside sales, national sales, account sales)
- ☐ Otro: \_\_\_\_\_

## Acerca de su empresa

**En mi empresa, la gestión de cuentas clave (GCC) es ...** Marque solo una opción.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Implementada (GCC actúa una tarea o proceso)						Institucionalizada (GCC es totalmente integrada en todos los departamentos de a organización)

**Los departamentos de mi empresa están perfectamente informados y preparados sobre las necesidades y requisitos específicos de las cuentas clave.** Marque solo una opción.

	1 (Totalmente de acuerdo)	2	3	4	5 (Muy en desacuerdo)
Cadena de suministro					
Logística					
Financiar					
Servicio al cliente					
IT					
Recursos humanos					
Producción / Fabricación					
Investigación y desarrollo					
Márketing					
Operación comercial					
Personal directivo superior					
Business intelligence					

## Sobre la relación intercultural con el cliente.

**Mi compañía trabaja en...** Marcar solo un opción por fila.

	1 (Totalmente de acuerdo)	2	3	4	5 (Muy en desacuerdo)
la comprensión de las diferencias culturales de sus clientes clave, consumidores y socios comerciales.					

Considerar como un factor importante para el éxito, las diferencias culturales con sus clientes clave, consumidores y socios comerciales.					
Proporcionar principios, líneas de guía y conjunto de valores para poder trabajar interculturalmente.					
Incluir características interculturales en los perfiles de cuenta, como preferencias de idioma, días festivos y religiosos, normas específicas de códigos de comportamiento, etc..					
Construir una fuerte relación, enfrentándose y superando las dificultades debidas a las diferencias culturales					
Considerar las habilidades interculturales para la contratación de fuerzas de ventas					
Proporcionar oportunidades de formación para la de gestión de cuentas clave, por ejemplo, time management, relación con el cliente, estrategia empresarial etc.					
Proporcionar oportunidades para la formación sobre la de la cultura del país de interés, por ejemplo, idioma aprendizaje, perspectivas culturales, trabajo en el extranjero etc.					

**En mi empresa, en las cuentas clave, la diversidad intercultural se considerará en la planificación y ejecución de tareas por el sector de . Marcar solo una opción por fila.**

	1 (Totalmente de acuerdo)	2	3	4	5 (Muy en desacuerdo)
Cadena de suministro					
Logística					
Financiar					
Servicio al cliente					
IT					
Recursos humanos					
Producción / Fabricación					
Investigación y desarrollo					
Márketing					
Operación comercial					
Personal directivo superior					
Business Intelligence					

**Por favor, clasifique estos requisitos de trabajo para los gerentes de cuentas clave. Marcar solo una opción por fila.**

	1 (muy importante)	2	3	4	5 (nada importante)
De mente abierta a diferentes ideas y valores.					
Abierto a desarrollar una conciencia sobre otras culturas					
Ser consciente de los peligros asociados a los estereotipos					
Cómodo trabajando con personas de diferentes culturas					

Experiencia significativa y capacidad a disfrutar en ambientes intercultural					
Amplia experiencia y conocimientos sobre diferentes dinámicas y culturas a nivel mundial					
Capacidad para hacer frente a los cambios constantes					
Capacidad para relacionarse e interactuar con personas de diferentes personalidades y experiencias					
Habilidad de fijarse en los detalles que otros normalmente no se darían cuenta					
Sensible a la situación económica y necesidades humanas.					
Habilidades diplomáticas y capaz en implementar diferentes estilos de gestión					
Sensibilidad y conciencia de cómo. las acciones de uno pueden afectar a otros					
Buena capacidad en escuchar, clarificar complejos argumentos, habilidad en cuestionar y responder adecuadamente					
Alto grado de resistencia física; excelente y robusta salud.					
Adepto en nuevos ambientes y entendiendo las motivaciones de los demás.					

### **Manténgase en contacto.**

Con gusto le enviaremos un resumen de los resultados de esta encuesta si deja su nombre y dirección de correo electrónico en las casillas que se encuentran al final de la encuesta.

No utilizaremos su dirección de correo electrónico con fines de marketing y no compartiremos estos detalles con otras partes.

De lo contrario, por favor, deje los campos en blanco.

Gracias por su participación.

Su nombre \_\_\_\_\_

Su correo electrónico \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 4 – Cover letter and questionnaire in Simple Chinese

### 社会经济、文化和宗教因素对关键客户管理的施行所产生的影响

尊敬的受访者:

诚意邀请您参加本次“社会经济、文化和宗教因素对关键客户管理的施行产生的影响”全球调研。

本次研究的发起人为英国剑桥安鲁大学管理学院商科与法律系的Nektarios Tzempelikos博士和Christian Lautenschläger博士。

在本次研究中，您需完成一份电子问卷。您可自愿参与本次研究，并可随时退出调研。填写本份问卷仅需大约10分钟，完成问卷没有报酬，也没有任何已知风险。本次研究获得了安鲁大学教员研究伦理委员会主席的批准。

如果您选择参与本项目，请诚实回答所有问题，并提交填写完成的问卷。

如果您需要了解更多信息，或由任何疑问，请通过以下方式联系我们

[christian.lautenschlager@pgr.anglia.ac.uk](mailto:christian.lautenschlager@pgr.anglia.ac.uk)或[nektarios.tzempelikos@anglia.ac.uk](mailto:nektarios.tzempelikos@anglia.ac.uk).

我们感谢您的帮助，我们保证您的所有回答将严格保密，且仅用于学术用途。

请点击下方的调研链接，在2019年9月1日前向我们提供反馈。

此致

Christian Lautenschläger 博士

Nektarios Tzempelikos 博士

### 关于您

您的出生地点是？ 请选择

您能流利地使用哪些语言？ 请勾选所有符合项

您的文化宗教背景是？ 请选择

您是否在其他文化区域居住过超过3年？ 仅勾选一项

- ☐ 是
- ☐ 否

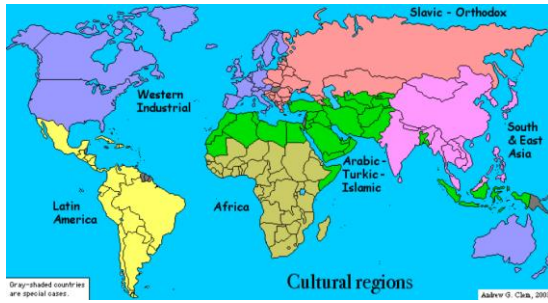
您最高的学术学位是？ 仅勾选一项

- ☐ 高中学位
- ☐ 学士学位（大学）
- ☐ 硕士学位/文凭（大学）
- ☐ 博士（大学）

您有多少年销售经验？ 仅勾选一项

- ☐ 1-3年
- ☐ 4-6年
- ☐ 7-10年





- ☐ 东亚和南亚
- ☐ 拉丁美洲
- ☐ 斯拉夫-东正教
- ☐ 阿拉伯突厥-伊斯兰
- ☐ 西方工业文化
- ☐ 非洲
- ☐ 犹太人

以下哪个地理术语最符合您目前的岗位职能？ 仅勾选一项

- ☐ 企业 (仅服务特定的高价值客户/顾客)
- ☐ 本地 (在国家或地区的特定地理范围内经营)
- ☐ 全国 (仅在一个国家或地区内经营)
- ☐ 跨国 (在多个国家或地区中经营)
- ☐ 国际 (在两个大洲间经营)
- ☐ 全球 (在多个大洲间经营)

您每月在工作中与客户、商业伙伴等的通讯有多少是国际通讯？ 仅勾选一项

- ☐ 1-10%
- ☐ 11-30%
- ☐ 31-50%
- ☐ 51-70%
- ☐ 71-100%

- ☐ 11-13年
- ☐ 15-20年
- ☐ 超过21年

以下哪个销售职务最符合您目前的岗位职责？ 仅勾选一项

- ☐ 内部销售
- ☐ 全国销售
- ☐ 客户销售
- ☐ 关键客户销售
- ☐ 总经理
- ☐ 销售总裁/总监
- ☐ 首席执行官/创始人
- ☐ 其他

您每月与顾客、客户和商业伙伴通讯时使用下列工具的频率有多高 (百分比)？ 每行仅勾选一项

	0-20%	21-40%	41-60%	61-80%	81-100%
电子邮件					
电话					
即时通讯 (例如微信、WhatsApp等)					
个人拜访					
电子传真					
社交媒体 (例如领英)					
Facebook 推特等)					
博客 (例如 TechCrunch)					

## 关于您的文化和社会环境

在我的社会环境中

每行仅勾选一项

	1 (非常认同)	2	3	4	5 (非常不认同)
社会性要求和指示清晰而细致，公民了解自己应承担的责任					
上流人士可享受特权					
被团体的其他成员接纳非常重要					
公开表达情感是不当行为					
人们协力朝共同的目标努力，并不在意大是大非					
公开辩论和自由选举是改变政治体系最有效的方式					

大部分人活在当下，而非面向未来					
法律法规几乎覆盖全部可能的情况					
主要奖励只参考绩效成果					

您的公司位于什么国家或地区？请选择

我的公司主要..... 仅勾选一项

- ☐ 生产或制造商品
- ☐ 供应或提供服务
- ☐ 经销或转售商品

您的公司的主要业务领域有哪些？勾选所有符合项

- ☐ 政府
- ☐ 电信
- ☐ 法律服务
- ☐ 建筑施工
- ☐ 食品加工
- ☐ 咨询
- ☐ 博彩
- ☐ 零售
- ☐ 特许经营
- ☐ 房地产
- ☐ 教育
- ☐ 制药
- ☐ 酒店/旅游业
- ☐ 大众传媒
- ☐ 医疗保健/医院
- ☐ 公共卫生
- ☐ 信息技术
- ☐ 废物处理
- ☐ 银行业
- ☐ 保险
- ☐ 金融服务
- ☐ 快速消费品
- ☐ 其他：\_\_\_\_\_

您的企业在什么地理区域中经营？勾选所有符合项

- ☐ 本地（在国家或地区的特定地理范围内经营）
- ☐ 全国（仅在一个国家或地区内经营）
- ☐ 跨国（在多个国家或地区中经营）
- ☐ 国际（在两个大洲间经营）
- ☐ 全球（在多个大洲间经营）

您的企业与员工、顾客、客户和商业伙伴沟通时通常使用哪些语言（口语和书面用语）？勾选所有符合项

您的企业目前有多少名员工？仅勾选一项

- ☐ 1-10人
- ☐ 11-20人
- ☐ 21-30人

在我的企业中，会议通常：仅勾选一项

	1	2	3	4	5	
是预先规划的 (提前至少2 周安排)						突发的 (提前不到1 小时安排)

我的企业鼓励员工为持续的绩效提升而奋斗。仅勾选一项

	1	2	3	4	5	
非常认同						非常不认同

在我的企业中，个人的影响力主要取决于：

仅勾选一项

	1	2	3	4	5	
个人能力和对 企业的贡献						职务的权力

在我的企业内，工作要求和指示清晰而细致，员工了解自己应承担的责任。仅勾选一项

	1	2	3	4	5	
非常认同						非常不认同

在我的企业中：仅勾选一项

	1	2	3	4	5	
比起个人主义，更重视团队合作						比起团队合作，更重视个人主义

您的企业是否拥有需求复杂、需要建立长期稳定关系的高潜力客户？

仅勾选一项

	1	2	3	4	5	
非常认同						非常不认同

您的企业是否会某些顾客当做关键客户对待，但不正式将他们列为关键客户？

仅勾选一项

	1	2	3	4	5	
非常认同						非常不认同

关键客户的管理方式为 勾选所有符合项

- ☐ 31-40人
 ☐ 41-50人
 ☐ 51-80人
 ☐ 81-100人
 ☐ 101-200人
 ☐ 201-300人
 ☐ 超过300人
- ☐ 由专门的关键客户销售团队直接管理
 ☐ 由专门的关键客户经理直接管理
 ☐ 由普通销售人员管理（内部销售、全国销售、客户销售）进行管理
 ☐ 其他：\_\_\_\_\_

您的企业在与其他文化地区联系、沟通与合作时是否有限制？*勾选所有符合项*

- ☐ 不，我们没有任何限制或约束
 ☐ 是，我们有政府限制，例如制裁或禁运
 ☐ 是，我们有企业限制
 ☐ 是，我有个人顾虑

在我们企业获得成功的方式为：  
*仅勾选一项*

	1	2	3	4	5	
提前规划						随机应变

## 关于您的企业

在我的企业内，关键客户管理（KAM） ..... *仅勾选一项*

	1	2	3	4	5	
得到实施 (KAM是一种任务或流程)						融入制度 (KAM被完全整合到企业内部的所有部门中)

我的企业内的部门完全了解关键客户的明确需求，并准备充分。 *每行仅勾选一项*

	1 (非常认同)	2	3	4	5 (非常不认同)
供应链					
物流					
财务					
客服					
IT信息技术					
人力资源					
生产制造					
研发					
市场营销					
商业运作					
高级管理层					
商业情报					

## 关于跨文化客户关系

我的企业 ..... *每行仅勾选一项*

	1 (非常认同)	2	3	4	5 (非常不认同)

努力了解并分辨与关键客户、客户和商业伙伴之间的文化差异					
将与关键客户、客户和商业伙伴之间的文化差异视作成功的关键因素					
用准则和规章设定跨文化工作价值观					
在客户档案中加入了跨文化特征，例如语言偏好、宗教节日、特定行为准则等					
由于跨文化差异，在建立KAM关系的过程中困难重重					
在招聘销售人员时会考虑跨文化技能					
提供关键客户管理培训机会，例如时间管理、客户关系、商业战略等					
提供特定文化培训机会，例如语言学习、文化洞察、外派工作等					

在我的企业中，以下部门会在规划并实施任务的过程中考虑关键客户的跨文化多样性。 每行仅勾选一项

	1 (非常认同)	2	3	4	5 (非常不认同)
供应链					
物流					
财务					
客服					
IT信息技术					
人力资源					
生产制造					
研发					
市场营销					
商业运作					
高级管理层					
商业情报					

请为关键客户经理的工作技能要求评分。 每行仅勾选一项

	1 (非常重要)	2	3	4	5 (不重要)
开放地接受多样理念和价值观					
培养对其他文化的意识					
认识到刻板印象的危险					
乐意与来自不同文化的人才共事					
有丰富的跨文化环境工作经验，并且乐在其中					
拥有国际事务和文化的广泛背景 and 知识					
能应对持续的改变					
能理解性格和背景各异的人才，并与他们互动					

能注意到其他人通常忽视的细节					
对经济上的考虑和人性上的需求保持敏感					
掌握外交手腕，对各类管理方式较为敏感					
敏锐地意识到行为对他人产生的影响					
良好的倾听、阐述、质疑和回应能力					
优秀的体力，健康状况极佳					
能适应新环境，理解他人的工作动力					

### 请保持联系。

如果您愿意在调研最后的方框内留下姓名和电子邮箱，我们很乐意向您发送本次研究的成果总结。

我们不会将您的电子邮箱用于任何营销用途，也不会与第三方分享这些信息。

如您不愿意留下联系方式，请留空白。

感谢您的参与。

您的姓名 \_\_\_\_\_

您的电子邮箱 \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 5 – Cover letter and questionnaire in Japanese

### 重要顧客管理の実践における社会経済、文化的、宗教的な要素の影響

参加者の皆様へ

グローバル調査研究「重要顧客管理(KAM)の実践における社会経済、文化的、宗教的な要素の影響」によるこそいらっしやいました。

本研究は、英国・ケンブリッジにあるアングリア・ラスキン大学経営大学院・ビジネス法科学部のNektarios Tzempelikos博士とChristian Lautenschläger 博士によって進められています。

本研究では、電子アンケート調査を行なっています。アンケートへの回答は任意で、中断も可能です。アンケートに要する時間は、およそ10分となります。アンケートには無償でご協力いただきますが、リスクの心配はいりません。本アンケート調査は、アングリア・ラスキン大学のFaculty Research Ethics Panel Chairに承認されています。

アンケートにご協力いただける場合、できる限り正直に回答していただき、回答後は速やかにご提出ください。

ご質問や追加の情報が必要な場合は、christian.lautenschlager@pgr.anglia.ac.uk または nektarios.tzempelikos@anglia.ac.uk までお願いします。

ご回答いただいた内容は個人情報として扱い、研究目的のみに使用させていただきます。ご協力、誠にありがとうございます。

アンケートにご協力いただける方は、以下のリンクをクリックしてください。回答の提出期限は、2019年9月1日となります。

敬具

Nektarios Tzempelikos 博士、Christian Lautenschläger 博士

### あなた自身について

出生地はどちらですか？ 選択ください。

流暢に話せる言語は何ですか？ 該当するものを全て選択。

文化的・宗教的な背景は？ 選択ください。



- ☐ 南東アジア
- ☐ 南米
- ☐ 正統派スラブ
- ☐ アラブ、チュルク語派イスラム

- ☐ 西側開発国
- ☐ アフリカ
- ☐ ユダヤ

異文化地域で3年以上生活したことがありますか？ 一つのみをつける。

- ☐ はい
- ☐ いいえ

最終学歴をおしえてください。一つのみをつける。

- ☐ 高校
- ☐ 学士号(大学)
- ☐ 修士号・学位(大学)
- ☐ 博士号(大学)

営業の経験年数をおしえてください。一つのみをつける。

- ☐ 1-3年
- ☐ 4-6年
- ☐ 7-10年
- ☐ 11-13年
- ☐ 15-20年
- ☐ 21年以上

以下の分野から、現在就かれている営業職に最も近いものを選んでください。一つのみをつける。

- ☐ 内勤営業
- ☐ 国内セールス
- ☐ 顧客セールス
- ☐ 主要顧客セールス
- ☐ ゼネラル・マネージャー
- ☐ 営業ディレクター・営業プレジデント
- ☐ 最高経営責任者・創業者
- ☐ その他

地理的な属性で、現在の役割機能に最も近いものを選んでください。一つのみをつける。

- ☐ 組織(特定の主要顧客を担当)
- ☐ 地域(国内で特定の地域を担当)
- ☐ 国内(1つの国のみで営業)
- ☐ 圏内(2つ以上の国で営業)
- ☐ 国際(2つの国を跨いで営業)
- ☐ グローバル(3つ以上の国で営業)

国外の顧客やビジネスパートナーなどとのコミュニケーションが、全体のコミュニケーションに占める割合は？ 一つのみをつける。

- ☐ 1-10%
- ☐ 11-30%
- ☐ 31-50%
- ☐ 51-70%
- ☐ 71-100%

顧客やビジネスパートナーとのコミュニケーションで、以下のコミュニケーション・ツールを使用する頻度(%)は？ 行ごとに一つのみをつける。

	20%未満	21-40%	41-60%	61-80%	81-100%
メール					
電話					
インスタントメッセージ(WeChat、WhatsAppなど)					
直接訪問					
テレファックス					
ソーシャルメディア(LinkedIn、フェイスブック、ツイッターなど)					
ブログ(TechCrunchなど)					

あなたの文化や社会について

私の社会では、  
行ごとに一つのみをつける。

	1 (大いに当てはまる)	2	3	4	5 (全く当てはまらない)
社会で必要とされることや指示が詳細に明文化されていて、そこに暮らす人達は、どのように行動するべきかを理解している。					
社会階級により特権が存在する。					
グループの中で、他のメンバーに受け入れられることは非常に大事だ。					
自分の感情を公に表現することが大事だ。人々が、善悪の判断をさほど気にせず、共通の目標に向かって行動する。					
人々が、善悪の判断をさほど気にせず、共通の目標に向かって行動する。					
公開討論と自由選挙が、政治体制を変えるために最も効果的。					
将来より今を大事に生きている人が多い。					
ほとんど全ての事象が、ルールや法律で網羅されている。					
報酬の大部分が、仕事の効率のみで決まる。					

--

勤務する会社の本拠地(国)は？ 選択ください。

私が働く組織において、ミーティングは： 一つのみをつける。

私の勤務先は主に... 一つのみをつける。

- ☐ 製造業
- ☐ サービス業
- ☐ 卸売業

あなたの勤務先企業で、重要な事業部門は？ 該当するものを全て選択。

- ☐ 政府関係
- ☐ 通信
- ☐ 法務サービス
- ☐ 建設
- ☐ 食品加工
- ☐ コンサルティング
- ☐ ギャンブル
- ☐ 小売り
- ☐ 金融
- ☐ 不動産
- ☐ 教育
- ☐ 製薬
- ☐ 宿泊・旅行業
- ☐ マスコミ
- ☐ ヘルスケア・医療
- ☐ 公衆衛生
- ☐ IT
- ☐ 廃棄物処理
- ☐ 銀行業
- ☐ 保険業
- ☐ 金融サービス
- ☐ 日用品
- ☐ その他: \_\_\_\_\_

あなたの勤務先企業の、地理的な属性は？ 該当するものを全て選択。

- ☐ 地域（国内で特定の地域で営業）
- ☐ 国内（1つの国のみで営業）
- ☐ 圏内（2つ以上の国で営業）
- ☐ 国際（2つの国を跨いで営業）
- ☐ グローバル（3つ以上の国で営業）

あなたの勤務先企業で、従業員同士、顧客、ビジネスパートナーとのコミュニケーションで、主に使われている言語（会話、文章）は？ 該当するものを全て選択。

あなたの勤務先企業の従業員数は？ 一つのみをつける。

- ☐ 1-10人
- ☐ 11-20人
- ☐ 21-30人
- ☐ 31-40人
- ☐ 41-50人
- ☐ 51-80人
- ☐ 81-100人
- ☐ 101-200人
- ☐ 201-300人
- ☐ 300人以上

あなたの勤務先企業は、特定の文化圏にある会社との取引やコミュニケーションに制約を課していますか？ 該当するものを全て選択。

- ☐ いいえ、我々の企業にはそうした制約や制限がありません。
- ☐ はい、制裁措置や禁輸など、政府による制約の対象となっています。
- ☐ はい、企業として制約を設けています。
- ☐ はい、個人的に気をつけています。

私の勤務先企業で成功するための鍵は：\*

一つのみをつける。

	1	2	3	4	5	
事前の計画性						物事が起きてからの対応力

あなたの勤務先企業について

	1	2	3	4	5	
事前に余裕をもって計画される（2週間以上前）						自然発生的（決まってから1時間以内に開催）

私が働く組織では、従業員は継続的にパフォーマンスを向上させるよう求められる。一つのみをつける。

	1	2	3	4	5	
大いに当てはまる						全く当てはまらない

私が働く組織では、社員の影響力の主な源泉は：一つのみをつける。

	1	2	3	4	5	
能力と組織への貢献度						役職に与えられた権限

私が働く組織では、業務の内容や指示が詳細に明文化されているので、従業員は何をすべきかが分かっている。一つのみをつける。

	1	2	3	4	5	
大いに当てはまる						全く当てはまらない

私が働く組織では：一つのみをつける。

	1	2	3	4	5	
個人主義よりもチームワークが重んじられる						チームワークよりも個人主義が重んじられる

あなたの勤務先企業には、複雑なニーズを抱え、長期的に関係を築く必要がある有力潜在顧客がいますか？ 一つのみをつける。

	1	2	3	4	5	
大いに当てはまる						全く当てはまらない

あなたの勤務先企業は、主要顧客と見なされる取引先があっても、そのような正式な区分を設けていない場合がありますか？ 一つのみをつける。

	1	2	3	4	5	
大いに当てはまる						全く当てはまらない

主要顧客への対応は：該当するものを全て選択。

- ☐ 主要顧客専門の営業チームが直接対応
- ☐ 主要顧客専門の営業マネージャーが直接対応
- ☐ 一般の営業チーム（内勤営業、国内セールス、顧客セールス）が対応
- ☐ その他: \_\_\_\_\_



私の勤務先企業においてKAMは... 一つのみをつける。

	1	2	3	4	5
実施されている(タスクまたはプロセス)					制度化されている(部門網羅的に、完全に一部をなしている)

私の勤務先企業の各部門は、主要顧客のニーズを把握しており、適切に対応できている。行ごとに一つのみをつける。

	1(大いに当てはまる)	2	3	4	5(全く当てはまらない)
サプライチェーン					
ロジスティクス					
金融					
カスタマーサービス					
IT					
人材					
製造					
R&D					
マーケティング					
商業					
トップマネジメント					
ビジネスインテリジェンス					

## 異文化間のカスタマーリレーション

私の勤務先は 一つのみをつける。

	1 (大いに当てはまる)	2	3	4	5 (全く当てはまらない)
主要顧客やビジネスパートナーに関連して、文化の違いに対する啓蒙教育に力を入れている。					
主要顧客やビジネスパートナーに関連して、文化の違いに対する配慮を成功するための重要な要素と考えている。					
業務における異文化交流について、理念、指針、価値基準を設けている。					
顧客のプロファイルに、使用言語、宗教記念日(休祝日)、特定の行動規範など、異文化についての記述を加えている。					
文化の違いにより、KAMリレーションに問題を抱えている。異文化への対応力を営業職の採用基準に取り入れている。					
文化的多様性異文化への対応力を営業職の採用基準に取り入れている。					
時間管理、カスタマーリレーション、事業戦略など、KAM関連のトレーニングを取り入れている。					
外国語の習得、多文化の学習、海外での勤務など、特定の文化についてのトレーニングを取り入れている。					

私の勤務先企業では、...の分野において、主要顧客の文化的多様性がタスクの計画や実行で考慮されています 行ごとに一つのみをつける。

	1 (大いに当てはまる)	2	3	4	5 (全く当てはまらない)
サプライチェーン					
ロジスティクス					
金融					
カスタマーサービス					
IT					
人材					
製造					
R&D					
マーケティング					
商業					
トップマネジメント					
ビジネスインテリジェンス					

仕事に必要な能力のうち、以下をKAMにおける重要度に従いランク付けしてください。行ごとに一つのみをつける。

	1 (非常に重要)	2	3	4	5 (重要ではない)
異なる考え方や価値観に対する柔軟性					
異文化への理解を高めること					
先入観を持つことのリスクを認識すること					
異文化の人達と働くことを不快に感じない					
異文化の度合いが高い環境で深い経験がある					
国際事情や国際文化に対し造詣が深い					
絶え間ない変化にも対応できる能力					
人の異なる性格や生い立ちを理解して付き合える能力					
人が見過ごすような詳細に気付ける能力					
経済的配慮や人のニーズに対する感度					
外交的な能力と経営スタイルの違いに対する感度					
自分の行動が他人に与える影響に対する感度と認識					
人の話に耳を傾け、質問しながら整理できる対話力					
優れた体力; 優良な健康状態					
新しい環境への適合力と他人の動機に対する理解力					

ご連絡お待ちしております。

本アンケートの最後にある記入欄に、お名前とEメールアドレスを記入していただける方には、調査結果の概要をお送りします。

記入いただいたEメールアドレスは、任意のマーケティング目的で使用しません。また、調査の内容については、他の団体と共有しません。

ご理解いただけない場合、記入欄は空白のまま結構です。

ご参加ありがとうございました。

氏名 \_\_\_\_\_

E メールアドレス \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 6 – Statistical details

### Country of birth

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Australia	12	2.8	2.8	2.8
	Azerbaijan	30	6.9	6.9	9.7
	Brazil	30	6.9	6.9	16.7
	Canada	12	2.8	2.8	19.4
	China	18	4.2	4.2	23.6
	Egypt	6	1.4	1.4	25.0
	Germany	6	1.4	1.4	26.4
	Greece	12	2.8	2.8	29.2
	India	24	5.6	5.6	34.7
	Israel	18	4.2	4.2	38.9
	Italy	48	11.1	11.1	50.0
	Jordan	30	6.9	6.9	56.9
	Kuwait	12	2.8	2.8	59.7
	Pakistan	42	9.7	9.7	69.4
	Saudi Arabia	54	12.5	12.5	81.9
	Singapore	12	2.8	2.8	84.7
	Sudan	12	2.8	2.8	87.5
	Syria	12	2.8	2.8	90.3
	Taiwan	12	2.8	2.8	93.1
	United Kingdom	18	4.2	4.2	97.2
	United States	12	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	432	100.0	100.0	

### Company location

		Countries	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Arabic Turkic- Islamic	Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates	132	30.6	30.6	30.6
	Jewish	Israel	24	5.6	5.6	36.1
	Latin America	Brazil, Mexico	60	13.9	13.9	50.0
	Slavic-Orthodox	Russia, Armenia	12	2.8	2.8	52.8
	South-East Asia	China, Taiwan, India	108	25.0	25.0	77.8
	Western Industrial	USA, Germany, Austria, United Kingdom, Italy, Belgium, Australia	96	22.2	22.2	100.0
	Total		432	100.0	100.0	

